

THE MILITANT

INSIDE

Introduction to 'Che Guevara Talks to Young People'

— PAGES 8-10

A SOCIALIST NEWSWEEKLY PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF WORKING PEOPLE

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Support Charleston dockworkers fight

Cops attack rally, workers framed up



Battle between hundreds of dockworkers and cops in Charleston, South Carolina. Police attacked the longshoremen who were protesting the unloading of cargo ships by nonunion workers January 20. Six hundred cops were deployed to escort 20 scabs to work.

BY STEPHEN BLOODWORTH

CHARLESTON, South Carolina—Cops in full riot gear attacked an early morning march to the waterfront by hundreds of members of the International Longshore-

men's Association (ILA) January 20. Eight of the unionists are now facing frame-up charges of inciting to riot.

The action, called to protest the use of nonunion labor on the docks, occurred two

days after many of the longshoremen and other workers from this area participated in the 50,000-strong Martin Luther King Day march and rally in Columbia, South Carolina, demanding that the Confederate battle flag, which has flown over the state Capitol since 1962, come down.

The police "blocked off the streets. There

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Thousands of unionists in Japan rally against layoffs at Nissan Motors

BY BRIAN WILLIAMS

More than 5,000 unionists marched through the streets of Tokyo on January 25 to protest planned job cuts and plant closures by Nissan Motor Co., Japan's second

biggest auto maker. The action was organized by the National Confederation of Trade Unions.

"Keep the Murayama assembly plant and listen to the voice of the workers," the demonstrators shouted as they punched their fists in the freezing air. Nissan has announced plans to cut 21,000 jobs—14 percent of its work force—over the next three years.

Last March, Renault, the French auto maker, bought up 36.8 percent of Nissan. The company announced plans to reduce its domestic car production by 30 percent and close five plants. The Murayama plant, along with factories in Kyoto and Aichi prefecture in central Japan, would be shut down by March 2001. Four hundred of the 3,100 workers would be kept in employment.

"The restructuring plan worked out by Carlos Ghosn [Nissan's chief operating officer] is wrong... and it will fail. We must quash that plan," stated unionist Yoji Kobayashi at a rally outside the company's headquarters.

"These drastic plans don't work in Japan," stated an official at the Murayama branch of the All Japan Metal and Machinery Information Workers Union, which helped organize the demonstration.

The action, according to the *Financial Times*, was "one of the largest protests targeted at one company in recent Japanese memory."

On the stock exchange, shares of Nissan fell 6 percent on January 25.

Farmers group calls national rally in D.C.

BY BILL ARTH

ST. LOUIS—The National Farmers Union has called a national Rally for Rural America in Washington, D.C., March 21.

Activities will begin March 20 with a "farmers' share" luncheon at noon. The luncheon will cost only a few cents, representing the farmers' share of the price of the food. Following the luncheon, there will be a town hall meeting on the rural crisis.

The March 21 rally will start at noon at noon at the Capitol.

Wes Shoemyer, president of the Missouri Farmers Union, said in an interview, "The rally is to draw attention to the plight of rural America, and the consolidation issues facing us as family farmers and mainstream America. The corporations need to be put on alert that they're being watched now."

Shoemyer said that the rally is also being supported by other farm organizations, ecumenical church organizations, and organized labor. The Missouri Farmers Union is organizing buses to the rally, as are other state Farmers Union organizations.

Popular rebellion shakes Ecuador

BY HILDA CUZCO

A popular rebellion led by thousands of indigenous peoples—most of them peasants and rural workers—engulfed Ecuador the third week of January. The country's president, Jamil Mahuad, was overthrown January 21 amid labor actions and indigenous mobilizations.

Working people were reacting to the president's announcement that he would replace the country's currency, the sucre, with the U.S. dollar at the rate of 25,000 to one—slashing already meager wages in one fell swoop. The uprising came after the government repressed previous protests against rampant unemployment and rapidly deteriorating living standards during a year in which the rate of inflation topped 60 percent.

Thousands of protesters entered the parliament building in Quito, the country's capital, January 21 and occupied it for several hours. The military guarding the premises did not interfere with the demonstration. A number of officers from the armed forces initially appeared to back the protest actions. Antonio Vargas, president of the main indigenous organization, the Confederation of Indigenous Nationalities of Ecuador (CONAIE), joined Gen. Carlos Mendoza, the country's defense minister, and former Supreme Court president Carlos Solórzano in a three-person junta, which announced that it had replaced the president.

The military brass maneuvered quickly, however, to keep the ruling capitalist families in control. Mendoza dissolved the junta and handed the presidency to Vice-president Gustavo Noboa the next day. Noboa became Ecuador's sixth head of state since 1996. Calling the move a betrayal, leaders

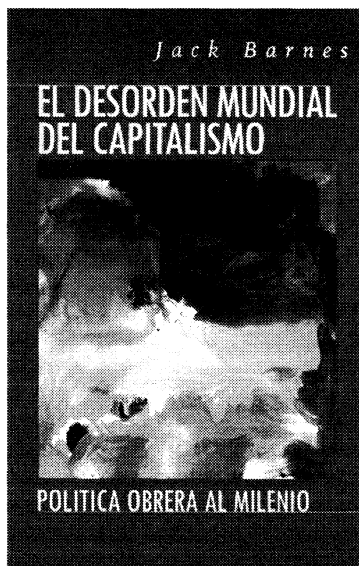
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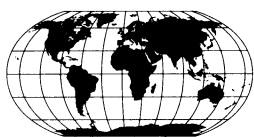


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London reforms Ireland cops

The British government will move ahead with reforms to the Royal Ulster Constabulary (RUC) in Northern Ireland. The force will be substantially reduced in size and seek to recruit Catholics—who currently make up 8 percent of this cop force—to its ranks. The RUC, along with the thousands of British troops stationed in the country, is organized to harass, intimidate, and victimize those fighting for a united, democratic Ireland and the withdrawal of British troops.

As Northern Ireland secretary Peter Mandelson announced the changes, cries of “disgrace” and “shame” rang out from the benches of the Conservative Party in parliament. David Trimble, a leader of the pro-British Ulster Unionist Party, warned, “Nothing this government says or does can dishonor the RUC and the men in it, this government can and does dishonor itself.”

The Unionists object to scrapping the 78-year-old force’s royal title. “It’s a proud name” agreed Mandelson, as he reluctantly announced plans to change it to the Police Services of Northern Ireland.

Scandal rocks German party

In a deepening crisis in Germany’s Christian Democratic party, former chancellor Helmut Kohl resigned his post as honorary chairman amidst a widening scandal into secret slush fund payments he had received while chancellor from 1982-1998. Kohl, who was also the leader of the Christian Democratic Union (CDU) for 25 years until the party suffered an electoral defeat at the hands of the Social Democratic party in 1998, has refused to name anonymous donors who contributed some \$1.2 million to him. Kohl retains his seat in the lower house of parliament, which shields him from criminal prosecution.

The current leader of the CDU, Wolfgang Schäuble, described these latest developments as “the worst crises of our [party’s] history.” Schäuble, who has himself admitted to accepting \$52,000 in unauthorized funds, offered to resign his post. However, the party’s executive committee urged him to stay on, saying otherwise they would all step down as well.

Meanwhile, a leading finance official of



Militant/Doug Cooper
Sinn Féin Youth join a Jan. 31, 1999, march to commemorate Bloody Sunday massacre of civil rights marchers in Derry, Northern Ireland. The call to disband the Royal Ulster Constabulary has long been a demand of the movement to reunify Ireland.

the CDU, Wolfgang Hüllen, committed suicide January 20. He left a note saying that he feared an audit of the party’s finances, as he had transferred money from the parliamentary group’s account.

CIA raises Iranian A-bomb scare

A new CIA assessment claims Iran may now be able to make a nuclear weapon. According to the *New York Times*, this new “discovery” is not based on evidence Iran has built a bomb, but “on the fact that the United States cannot track with great certainty increased efforts by Iran to acquire nuclear materials and technology.”

Behind these charges is increased concern in U.S. ruling circles about Washington’s inability to weaken ties between Iran and Russia. A year ago, the Clinton administration imposed sanctions against two Russian scientific institutions, claiming they might be providing Iran with nuclear technology.

In a rebuff to Washington, Russia’s defense minister, Igor Sergeev, in a mid January meet-

ing with Iran’s Security Council secretary, Khasan Roukhani, reaffirmed Moscow’s pledge to maintain its military and scientific ties with Tehran. The Russian government promised to continue its commercial nuclear cooperation with Iran, especially its program to help Iran complete two reactors that were damaged in the 1980s in the Iran-Iraq war.

Bolivia: strikers protest water hike

Transportation workers in Cochabamba, southeast of the capital city of La Paz in Bolivia, called for an indefinite strike January 13 and joined the protests against the water utility’s exorbitant price increase.

The executive secretary of the transportation federation of Cochabamba, José Luis Veizaga, said that the strike is effective, with barricades blocking highways to the outlying rural areas. A meeting between different civic organizations rejected a 35 percent rate hike for water consumption, which was adopted by local authorities. Police were deployed around bridges to prevent protesters from blocking public transportation. “We hope the government provides concrete proposals. Otherwise we will increase the pressure,” stated Mauricio Barrientos, president of the local civic committee.

In December, the government of President Hugo Banzer faced angry protests as public transportation unionists took to the streets to oppose increased gasoline prices. Many people were wounded, as police attacked the protesters.

Indonesia: protesters shut plant

Protesters halted power for several days to a large industrial park on the Indonesian island of Bintan, which is close to Singapore. Several hundred villagers armed with knives

and spears shut the plant that provides electricity to 27 factories in an estate operated as a joint venture between Singaporean, Japanese, and other foreign investors. The villagers are demanding more generous compensation for land taken away from them to build the estate and a nearby tourist resort.

“If the situation isn’t resolved, there will be a loss of confidence in Indonesia’s economic climate and local authorities,” said Tay Siew Choon, managing director of SembCorp Industries, the Singapore firm that manages the Bintan Industrial Park.

Fuel prices surge, inflation low

Energy prices surged 13.4 percent—the biggest annual increase since 1990—boosting overall consumer prices by 2.7 percent in 1999. Leading the way were fuel oil prices, which rose 30.9 percent last year, the largest gain since 1979. Gasoline prices were also up by 30.1 percent. Aside from energy costs, most other prices posted the smallest annual gain since 1965.

While Labor Secretary Alexis Herman hailed the low inflation rate as further proof of a booming economy, the *Wall Street Journal* pointed to a survey conducted by the National Association for Business Economics that it describes as “beginning to detect the first signs of gathering storm clouds.”

“All of the precursors for a creeping, longer-term period of inflation are in place,” said Diane Swonk, president of the organization. “You get a sense of straws mounting on the camel’s back.”

In other economic news, the Labor Department announced January 14 that wages—adjusted for inflation—averaged \$13.24 an hour in 1999, up 3.6 percent from the 1998 average of \$12.78.

Prisoners win lawsuit against authorities for abuse

Some 2,100 inmates from Missouri won a \$2.2 million settlement in class-action lawsuit filed against abuse by prison authorities. Videotaped shakedowns showed jail guards beating and kicking prisoners, who had been sent to private jails in Texas from 1995-97 because of overcrowding in Missouri.

The prisons were run by Capitol Corrections Resources Inc. The state of Missouri admitted no liability in the settlement, but agreed to a five-year moratorium on sending prisoners to jails run by this company, except under special circumstances. The inmates will share \$1.12 million. The rest goes to cover lawyers’ fees.

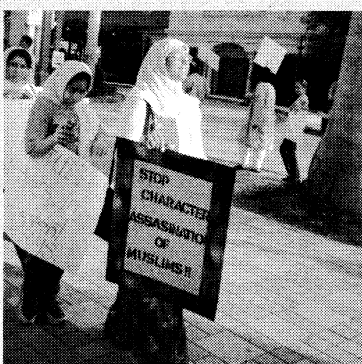
In a related development, the Supreme Court on January 18 upheld a lower court’s ruling permitting Alabama prisoners to segregate hundreds of inmates who have tested HIV positive. They can be prevented from participating in educational programs and religious services where other prisoners congregate. Only Alabama, Mississippi, and South Carolina state prison systems enforce such a policy.

—BRIAN WILLIAMS

THE MILITANT

Defend democratic rights

As the capitalist economy falls deeper into crisis the rulers increase their assault on the democratic rights and political space toilers use to resist the attacks on the social wage. The ‘Militant’ covers this fight for democratic rights from the South Carolina protests against the Confederate flag to the ‘terrorist’ frame-ups of Muslims in New York. Don’t miss a single issue!



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U.S. officials stall on returning Cuban boy

BY ARGIRIS MALAPANIS

NEW YORK—Mariela Quintana and Raquel Rodríguez, the two grandmothers of Elián González, a six-year-old from Cuba, arrived here January 21 to press for the boy's return to his country.

"No one has the right to make him an American citizen," Quintana, the boy's paternal grandmother, told reporters upon arrival at JFK International airport. "He was born in Cuba. He lives in Cuba. He's a Cuban." She was referring to plans by an array of congressmen to introduce legislation granting González U.S. citizenship. The move could block the January 4 Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) ruling that the boy should be returned to his father's custody in Cuba.

González's mother drowned when the flimsy boat in which she was traveling from Cuba sank in November. Ten others also died. They were trying to come to the United States in a trip organized by a smuggler who had extracted steep payments from them.

The U.S. government has systematically limited the numbers of entry visas it issues Cubans, while enforcing a policy that encourages people to make risky raft trips outside legal channels in order to bolster Washington's false allegations that they are forced to "escape." Under the 1994 U.S.-Cuban immigration accords, U.S. authorities are supposed to return to Cuba those intercepted at sea. At the same time, however, under the Cuban Adjustment Act anyone from Cuba landing on U.S. shores is granted residency within a year.

Three survived the trip, including the six-year-old boy who was found clinging to an inner tube off the Florida coast November 25. The boy's father, Juan González, immediately asked for his son's return to Cuba, as did all his grandparents. Lázaro González, a great uncle in Miami, has kept the boy at his home there. Scores of bourgeois politicians and pundits around the country are using these distant relatives in Miami to press for keeping the boy in the United States. Ever since, hundreds of thousands of people have demonstrated throughout Cuba, often daily, to back Havana's demand for the boy's immediate repatriation.

Washington's record of hostility

The case has spotlighted once again the 40-year-old unremitting hostility by Washington against revolutionary Cuba. Democratic and Republican presidential contenders have used it to varying degrees to paint Cuba as a "totalitarian state" and justify the U.S. rulers' economic war on its people. Above all, however, the evolution of the case highlights another instance, among mounting evidence, of the breakup of bipartisanship in U.S. foreign policy.

The INS ruled that the boy should return to his father in Cuba by January 14. U.S. president William Clinton and other top administration officials, including Attorney General Janet Reno, backed this position. It appeared they had some broader backing among ruling circles for a deal to return the boy to Cuba. That scenario came apart quickly, though.

The Clinton administration was not inclined to send U.S. marshals to remove the boy by force from where he is staying in Little Havana, given expected physical opposition by right-wingers there. The Justice Department lifted the January 14 deadline once the INS ruling was vigorously challenged by scores of conservative and right-wing politicians and others.

The Justice Department did brush aside a decision by a Miami-Dade Circuit Court judge giving temporary custody of Elián González to his great uncle, an indication that the campaign by rightist Cuban Americans in Miami is a sideshow to the policy debate among the U.S. rulers around this case. Reno said the INS decision could be appealed in federal court. A suit filed by the boy's Miami relatives to block the INS ruling is now assigned to William Hoever, a federal judge in Florida, with no deadline for resolution. The suit claims that sending the boy back to Cuba amounts to child abuse.

Many capitalist politicians—not caring much about repeated opinion polls indicating a majority of those asked back returning the boy to his immediate family—seized on this to press a policy course differing from that of the Clinton administration.

When Congress reconvened January 24, U.S. Sen. Connie Mack, Republican of Florida, introduced a bill to grant Elián citizenship—a first for a six-year-old. The legislation is co-sponsored by Senate majority leader Trent Lott and Jesse Helms, the right-wing Republican from North Carolina who chairs the Foreign Relations Committee.

Similar bills were introduced in the House of Representatives, backed not only by Republicans but a number of Democrats. Other Democrats presented counter resolutions to block these moves. A day earlier, Republican presidential front-runner George W. Bush said granting the boy citizenship "would be a wonderful gesture." John McCain, the second main contender for the Republican presidential nomination, has backed this from the beginning, claiming Elián and his mother "escaped" a "communist government."

In a parallel move aimed at undercutting efforts by the boy's immediate relatives in Cuba and the Cuban government to win sympathy for the demand of Elián's repatriation, the big-business press began to publicize the request by Arianne Horta, one of the other two Cubans who survived along with Elián, that her five-year-old daughter she left behind in Cuba be reunited with her in Miami. An op-ed column in the January 24 *Wall Street Journal* featured this case as part of a supposed mass desire of Cubans to flee "totalitarianism."

Divisions on U.S. foreign policy

What has developed around the Elián González case is similar to other examples of unanticipated initiatives by right-wing politicians or wings of the ruling class to openly challenge and undercut the foreign policy course of the White House. These examples include the recent appearance by Jesse Helms at the UN Security Council, the voting down by the U.S. Senate of the nuclear test ban treaty that Clinton had signed in 1996, and the debacles over the Clinton administration's policy regarding the World Trade Organization and its decision to free 11 Puerto Rican political prisoners. These are signs of weakness, of a declining ruling class, not of strength. They were brought to the surface graphically more than a year ago around the failed attempt to impeach Clinton.

Four new Pathfinder books off the press in time for Havana Book Fair

BY MICHAEL BAUMANN

The Havana Book Fair, a major political and cultural event held every two years in the Cuban capital, opens February 9.

Among the publishers attending this time, as every year since 1986, is Pathfinder Press. The special thing this year is that the New York publisher will be presenting four new books at the fair, along with a wide range of the more than 350 other titles it has in print.

The week-long fair draws publishers from every part of Cuba, much of Latin America, and many countries in Europe. The event, which is open to the public, drew 40,000 people in 1998, as crowds of students, workers, soldiers, teachers, and others came to see, discuss, and buy new books by publishers from Cuba and around the world.

At the Pathfinder booth, discussing the books, their contents, and their distribution—and taking part in the nonstop political discussions that usually follow—will be a team of volunteers made up of workers and students from Australia, Canada, France, Iceland, Sweden, and the United Kingdom. Reporters from the *Militant* will cover the event.

El desorden mundial del capitalismo, the Spanish-language edition of *Capitalism's World Disorder*, will be prominently featured among the new titles Pathfinder presents. Many in Cuba and elsewhere who have read the Spanish edition of the earlier volume by Jack Barnes—*The Changing Face of U.S. Politics*—and who have been asking when the Spanish translation of the new book would be ready will be glad to see it on sale in Havana and elsewhere this month.

Teamsters strike Avis in Puerto Rico



Strikers picket the Avis car rental company at the airport in San Juan, Puerto Rico. The 80 Teamsters members who work at Avis throughout the country walked out January 22 after eight months of negotiations over a new contract. The company is trying to subcontract out work, eliminating union jobs.

Meanwhile, massive demonstrations continued in Cuba demanding the boy's return, including one of nearly 150,000 people in Santa Clara this past week. In Havana, workers are building a new plaza in front of the U.S. Interests Section where many of the protest actions have been held. Ricardo Alarcón, president of Cuba's National Assembly, called on the U.S. government to enforce the earlier INS ruling, during a January 22 interview in Havana. He stated that the U.S. trip by the two grandmothers of Elián González may help speed such a course.

When Janet Reno and INS commissioner Doris Meissner met the grandmothers in Washington, D.C., January 22, they told Quintana and Rodríguez that the White House will simply press for litigation of the case in federal courts along the lines of the INS ruling. No other assurances were offered.

On January 24, the two grandmothers, hoping for a private meeting with their grandson, flew to Miami along with federal officials and representatives of the National Council of Churches, which sponsored their

U.S. trip. Hundreds of Cuban-American rightists filled the streets around the house where Elián is staying. His great uncle, backed by his lawyers and right-wing politicians, refused to hold the meeting any other place. Rodríguez and Quintana did not agree to walk into that hostile setting in Little Havana. After several hours of waiting at a nearby airport they returned to Washington, where they met with U.S. congressmen.

The INS subsequently threatened to lift the temporary permission for Elián González to remain in the United States if the boy's Miami relatives continued to refuse letting the grandmothers meet their grandson privately at a place of their choice.

On January 25, the boy's great uncle agreed to the conditions. U.S. government officials went out of their way to give assurances that federal agents would not use the occasion to turn Elián over to his grandmothers. "We have reiterated that the grandmothers will not be able to take him with them at this time," stated Carole Florman, a Justice Department spokeswoman.

Pathfinder is also presenting *Making History: Interviews with Four Generals of Cuba's Revolutionary Armed Forces*. This book will be launched during an event at the fair along with its Spanish edition, which is being brought out by Editora Política, the publishing house of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Cuba.

Pathfinder will also be featuring the newly published *Che Guevara Talks to Young People* along with its Spanish edition, *Che Guevara habla a la juventud*. This valuable new collection by the Argentine-born revolutionary who became one of the central leaders of the Cuban Revolution deals with a broad range of range of political, economic, and party-building questions. Most of the speeches have either never been available in English before, or were part of collections that have been out of print for decades. The volume was prepared with the enthusiastic support of Casa Editora Abril, the publishing house of the Union of Young Communists of Cuba, which assembled the Spanish texts of Guevara's speeches and compiled them digitally.

Editora Abril will be presenting the new publications together with Pathfinder at the book fair.

Supporters of Pathfinder are making a special effort to ensure the new titles are available for the fair. An international team of volunteers translated *Capitalism's World Disorder* into Spanish, and workers and young people in New York City volunteered to checking and cross referencing needed to produce the index for the new *El desorden mundial del capitalismo*. A garment worker from Miami and an auto worker from Cleve-

land who assist on the design for covers of Pathfinder books have volunteered their time on the weekends to make possible the new publications. The effort to publish four new books in a short period of time is an unprecedented achievement for Pathfinder's print shop.

Contribute to the 'Books for Cuba' fund

As in the past, the great bulk of the Pathfinder titles taken to the Havana Book Fair will, at the end of the fair, be donated to a variety of Cuban cultural institutions. These range from neighborhood and factory libraries to university collections, where the books will remain permanently available.

This involves a substantial expense—more than \$6,000 including shipping—made possible by supporters of Pathfinder around the world. Your generous contribution is needed now. Please send your check or money order to the *Militant*, 410 West St., New York, NY 10014, payable to the *Militant* and earmarked 'Books for Cuba' fund.

YS member speaks at Ball State meeting of 100

This column is written and edited by the Young Socialists (YS), an international organization of young workers, students, and other youth fighting for socialism. For more information about the YS write to: Young Socialists, 3284 23rd St., San Francisco, CA 94110. Tel: (415) 824-1429. E-mail: 105162.605@compuserve.com

BY LUIS RIVERA

CHICAGO — On January 17, Martin Luther King Day, the Young Socialists were invited to Ball State University in Muncie, Indiana, to give a presentation on the relevance of the ideas of Martin Luther King and Malcolm X for young fighters today.

The meeting was sponsored by the Diversity Committee at Ball State Teachers College, which is organizing a series of discussions on race and culture.

More than 100 students came to the meeting, which focused on the lessons we can draw from the civil rights movement, and the specific contributions of King and Malcolm X.

Speaking as a member of the YS, I emphasized the importance of the civil rights movement as an example set by thousands of working people on how we can change society.

Although there was no revolutionary upheaval, the civil rights movement did bring a profound change in American society. The Jim Crow system of segregation was destroyed, which was a victory for the entire working class. Martin Luther King's role in helping lead this movement was his most important contribution.

Many of the students were open to the idea that a reorganization of society is necessary,

considering the economic crisis working people face around the world, the racism and sexism that still exists, the intensifying attack on the standard of living, and the increasing threat of imperialist war.

I then raised that Malcolm X pointed a revolutionary way forward for all of humanity. While Martin Luther King was a courageous fighter, Malcolm X was a revolutionary in the deepest sense of the word. He recognized that the capitalist system had to be replaced. He understood that a system based on exploitation and division of working people could never bring about equality.

The students listened to several excerpts of tapes of Malcolm X's speeches where he spoke against imperialist intervention around the world and supported the rising colonial revolutions in Africa, Asia, and Latin America, including the Cuban revolution.

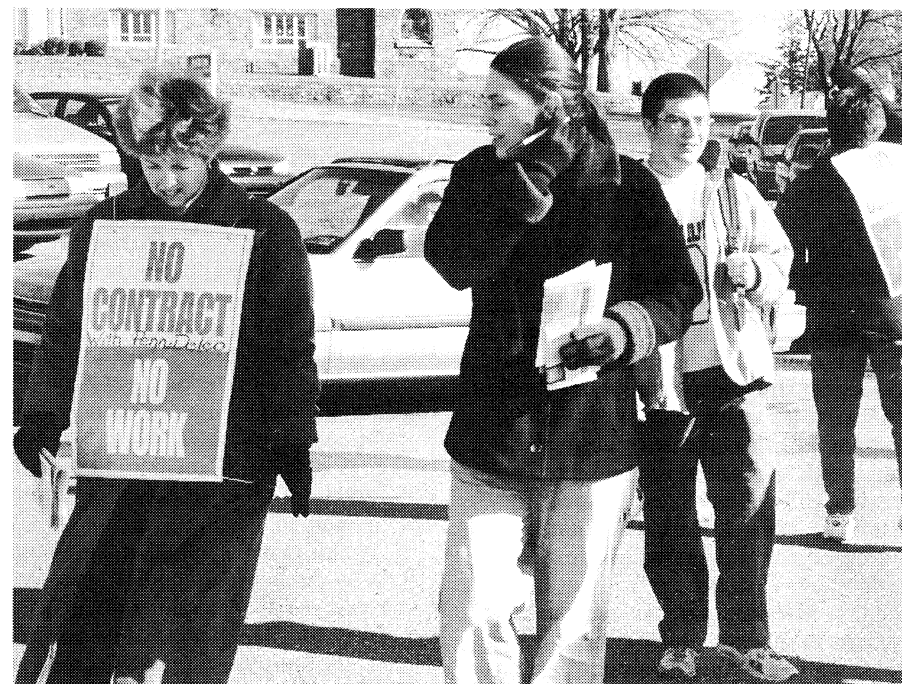
The questions raised during the discussion period were mainly about socialism. The intense discussion during and after the talk reflected a hunger within young people for revolutionary politics.

A literature table that our team of socialists from Chicago set up on the campus during the day sold 24 books and pamphlets on a wide variety of topics, including the Russian revolution, Cuba, women's liberation, Puerto Rico, and African-American history. We also sold two copies of *Capitalism's World Disorder*.

February is Black History Month, which opens opportunities for the Young Socialists to build classes about socialism and Afro-American history.

Youth are drawn to an organization that includes education and action. One example of this is that at our literature table a number of

Socialists extend strike solidarity



YS member Rebecca Arenson, second from left, and J. P. Crysdale, join picket line to support Pennsylvania school workers who walked out January 3 demanding a wage increase. The workers ended their strike January 10. See story below.

students signed up to participate in a rally on January 29 by workers at the Bayer pharmaceutical company in Elkhart, Indiana, who are demonstrating against the closing

of their plant.

Luis Rivera is a member of the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers.

Helms UN speech shows rifts in U.S. foreign policy

BY MAURICE WILLIAMS

In an unprecedented event U.S. senator Jesse Helms insulted and admonished the United Nations January 20, describing it as "just one part of America's diplomatic arsenal" in a half-hour speech before the UN Security Council January 20.

Helms's visit marked the first time a U.S. legislator has addressed the imperialist-created institution. His right-wing, chauvinist demagoguery reflected the fissures in the U.S. rulers' bipartisan foreign policy. He asserted that Washington would not tolerate the "UN aspiring to establish itself as the central authority of a new international order of global laws and global governance."

Claiming to speak for the "American people," Helms derided the "lack of gratitude" among UN delegates who are "routinely voting against America in the General Assembly." His visit before the Security Council was arranged by Richard Holbrooke, Washington's ambassador to the United Nations.

Four days after Helms's remarks, U.S. secretary of State Madeleine Albright told the Security Council, "Only the president and the executive branch can speak for the United States." Members of the Clinton administration "see our role in the world and our relationship to this organization quite differently than does Senator Helms," she added.

Helms declared to the Security Council delegates, "The American people will never accept the claims of the United Nations to be the 'sole source of legitimacy on the use of force' in the world." He bragged about Washington's unilateral use of military force, such as in its assault last year on Yugoslavia. Helms threatened "eventual U.S. withdrawal" if the United Nations "seeks to impose its presumed authority on the American people."

Part of American diplomatic arsenal

The right-wing senator called the United Nations "just one part of the American diplomatic arsenal," to be used as an instrument to "coordinate collective action" that the U.S. rulers approve. He hailed the "Reagan Doctrine," boasting that military interventions carried out in many countries under former president Ronald Reagan in the 1980s were executed without UN approval.

Martin Andjaba, Namibia's ambassador to the United Nations, retorted that the so-called Reagan Doctrine "contributed to a lot of suffering in Africa. We have it fresh in our memories." Andjaba cited how Washington supported the old apartheid regime in South Africa, helping the racist government maintain colonial rule over Namibia and sustaining the apart-

heid-backed UNITA guerrilla force in Angola, which prolonged a civil war there for some 25 years.

"Some of us in SWAPO [Southwest African Peoples Organisation] who were a legitimate and genuine liberation movement were called other names: terrorists. And those that caused death and destruction in Africa were called liberators—and they were supported."

Helms responded to UN delegates who criticized Washington's refusal to pay its \$1.5 billion debt owed to the organization. He said UN officials declared "absurdly that countries like Fiji and Bangladesh are carrying America's burden."

The Republican senator said a check for \$926 million would be in the mail when UN officials begin to implement what he described as "previously agreed-upon common-sense reforms." Helms claimed Washington had spent \$10.2 billion last year on the United Nations and its programs.

Steven Dimoff, vice-president of the United Nations Association of the United States, said Helms's claim "really does stretch reality," noting that the amount includes military operations organized by Washington without any input from the United Nations.

Helms also denounced the Security Council for allowing Baghdad to expel UN "inspection teams" from Iraq. Two days before his speech to the Security Council, Paris and Beijing joined Moscow in voicing opposition to UN secretary general Kofi Annan's nomination of Rolf Ekeus as chief "weapons inspector" for Iraq. U.S. officials had supported Ekeus, who had headed the inspections in Iraq from 1991 to 1997. The debate over his nomination highlighted tensions between Washington and the workers states in Russia and China, as well as its imperialist rival in France.

Last year the Clinton administration was forced to admit that some of the weapons inspectors snooping around Iraq were spies.

When they were booted from the country at the end of 1998, the White House conducted a four-day bombing onslaught in December. In the 13 months since that attack, Washington has continued to bomb Iraq, launching some 2,000 missiles and bombs against sites throughout the country.

The U.S. rulers have sought to use their military assault and the sanctions strangling the Iraqi people as a club against their imperialist competitors, particularly those in France, who had lucrative oil contracts with Baghdad.

Meanwhile, rising oil prices are exacerbating divisions on the Security Council. In December the Iraqi government temporarily stopped its oil exports to protest Security Council decisions.

"With oil prices now edging toward \$30 a barrel ... many observers contend Baghdad has more leverage over U.N. policy now than at any time since the 1991 Gulf War," the *Wall Street Journal* reported January 24.

School workers end strike in Pennsylvania

BY REBECCA ARENSON

ASTON, Pennsylvania — "The school board gave us an ultimatum," explained Sharon McLaughlin, an office aide on strike against the Penn-Delco school district near Philadelphia. "They said, 'Accept this by the end of the day, or we'll go back to our original offer.'"

The weeklong strike ended January 10 after a tentative agreement was reached between the negotiating committee, representing 80 secretaries and teachers aides of the Penn-Delco Educational Support Personnel Association, and the school district.

The contract proposal would give some sick days and holiday pay to part-time employees. However, the board refused to negotiate health benefits for these workers. Wage increases would range from 13 to 28 percent over the four-year contract, depending on job classification and years of service.

"The newspapers have given inaccurate figures on what we've asked for concerning wages," explained McLaughlin. "They said we were demanding a 42 percent increase, but this figure included all benefits along with the salary. We just wanted our salary to be in line with what others are making in our field."

Workers have not received a raise since July 1, 1997. Starting pay for support staff is \$6.50 an hour, reduced from \$7.15 an hour in 1997. For full-time secretaries the starting wage is \$8.70 an hour.

If the contract is accepted, instead of retroactive pay workers will receive a signing bonus of between 1 and 3 percent of their annual income. "This doesn't mean much in reality," said McLaughlin. "For someone who makes

\$7,000 a year, that's \$70 and after taxes — barely a day's pay."

Rebecca Arenson is a member of the International Association of Machinists.

Dock workers launch nationwide strike, demand pay hike in India

BY BRIAN WILLIAMS

Dock workers in India launched a strike at 11 major ports January 18 demanding a 100 percent pay increase and a halt to government plans to privatize the ports. The strike comprises 125,000 unionized and 45,000 unregistered workers. It's the first such nationwide strike on the docks in a decade.

In Calcutta, 20 workers were injured as police, with batons swinging, attacked strikers demonstrating outside the local port authority headquarters on the first day of the walkout.

Three days earlier some 90,000 power plant workers in the state of Uttar Pradesh walked out over government plans to privatize electricity distribution and cut jobs. Government officials declared the strike illegal, detained hundreds of workers, and ordered the strikers back to work under threat of dismissal. Uttar

Pradesh is one of India's largest states with a population of 165 million.

"We shall not withdraw from the strike until the government takes back its decision to reorganize the state electricity board," stated Shailendra Dubey, a spokesperson for the striking workers.

Meanwhile, more than 300,000 state government workers in the states of Jammu and Kashmir have been on strike for the past three weeks. They're demanding the payment of back wages owed to them by the government.

U.S. treasury secretary Lawrence Summers, who is organizing a visit to India by U.S. president William Clinton in March, praised the government's determination to push through "market reforms" despite workers' opposition. "I'm beginning to get a very good feeling about the Indian economy," Summers said.

Socialist rail workers explain success in book campaign

The campaign to promote *Capitalism's World Disorder: Working-Class Politics at the Millennium* has been extended until March 15 (see article on page 6). This week we are running reports from a garment worker and from workers in the rail industry.

The first report was faxed in by members of a team that traveled to South Carolina to meet longshoremen in Charleston who had stood up for their rights and their union—the International Longshoremen's Association (ILA)—against police assault. They also sold the *Militant*, *Perspectiva Mundial*, and *Pathfinder* titles, including *Capitalism's World Disorder*, to other workers, students, and from street tables.

BY PAUL CORNISH

CHARLESTON, South Carolina—Fifteen copies of the socialist newsweekly, the *Militant*, were sold to students at the College of Charleston here January 25. In addition, students bought the *Communist Manifesto*, *Intensify the Struggle* by Nelson Mandela (in Spanish), *Socialism and Man in Cuba* by Che Guevara, *Cuba Will Never Adopt Capitalist Methods* by Fidel Castro, and a pamphlet defending women's right to choose abortion. We also sold one introductory subscription to the *Militant*. Four people signed the Young Socialists mailing list.

Seven papers were sold at a shift change at the Westracol Paper Mill Co. One busload from this workplace attended the anti-racist demonstration in Columbia on Martin Luther King Day. That protest attracted 50,000 people who demanded that the Confederate battle flag be taken down from the state capitol.

One paper was sold in the Black community off a street table. Thirteen papers were sold to longshoremen at their ILA union meeting.



Rail workers meet their goals

BY ELLIE GARCÍA

Socialist railroad workers went over their goal of getting 100 copies of *Capitalism's World Disorder: Working Class Politics at the Millennium* into the hands of coworkers, fighters, and youth and onto the shelves of bookstores and libraries. Members of the United Transportation Union (UTU) sold 44 books out of a goal of 35 to working people and youth on the job, at picket lines, campuses, and during political events. In addition, 76 books out of a goal of 65 were placed in libraries and stores.

The *Militant* has received a number of reports from these workers who describe how they have sold and placed the book while they work to strengthen their union.

Amtrak conductor Ruth Robinett reported selling one to a motorman during a

week last December when Transit Workers Union members were preparing for a strike to press their contract demands. Employers and union officials struck a deal on the eve of the strike. "He said he had been thinking about the similarities of problems all workers face, and also the dominance of big business in government."

Another Amtrak worker bought a copy that same week. "He was disillusioned with the Democratic Party candidate he had voted for in a local election," wrote Robinett. "The candidate won the election and promptly came out against the transit workers. I plan to talk to him next week to see what he thinks about what he's reading."

Robinett and other rail workers also promoted *Capitalism's World Disorder* to members of other unions, and to young fighters and small producers.

Andrea Morell, a conductor at Amtrak in Boston, reported that "two rail conductors sold a copy of the book to a dairy farmer in Vermont. He bought the book for its explanation of the world capitalist crisis, whose effects he and his family feel acutely as milk prices drop and government price supports are threatened. On that same trip five books were placed in a nearby bookstore."

Morell wrote that "one freight engineer at CSX has got to know some small fishermen in New England who are resisting government attacks on their livelihoods. She placed a book in a store in the small Massachusetts fishing port of Sictuate."

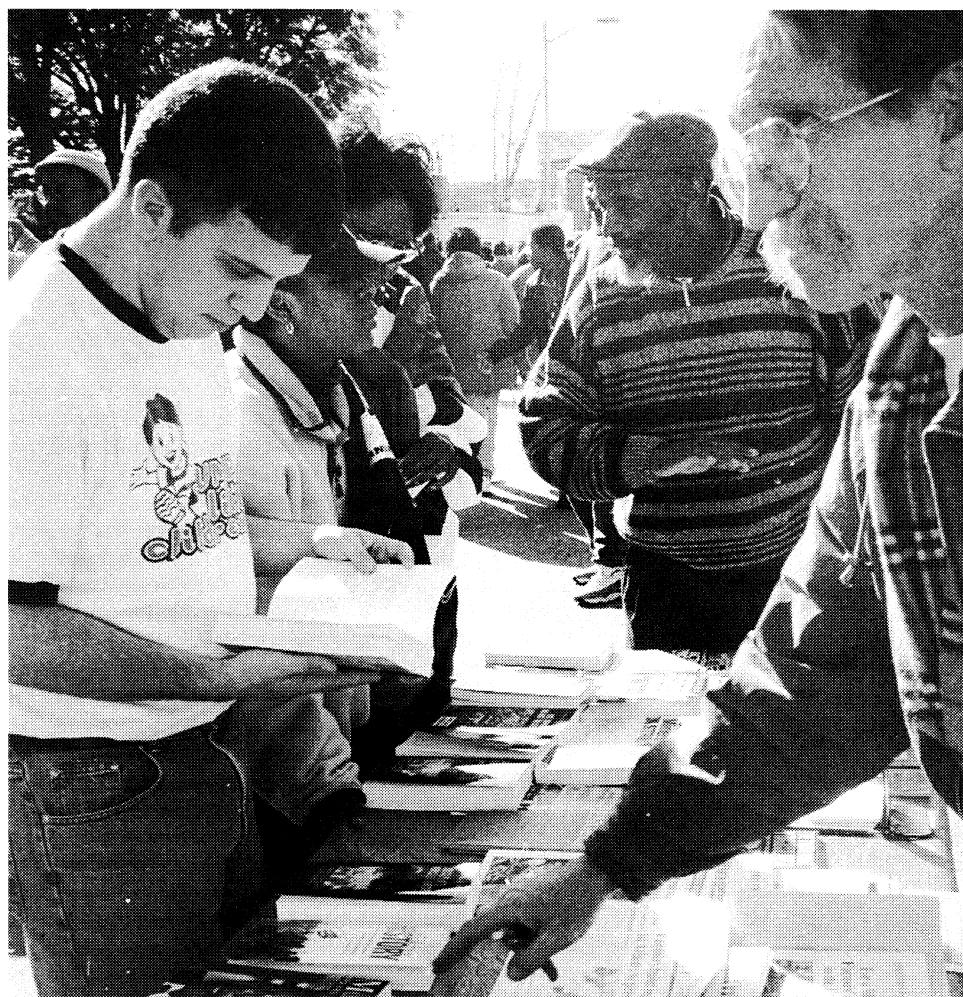
Chris Rayson, a switchman at the Burlington Northern/Santa Fe in Seattle, explained, "Socialist UTU members here were very active in calling for solidarity with the port drivers, who organized a strike during August last year. We regularly attended rallies and picket lines. I was running a campaign for Seattle Port Commission and participated in many of these activities as a communist candidate on the railroad."

"Another socialist works in an intermodal yard near the docks. He was on trains where the crew refused to cross the picket line and was involved in discussions with coworkers on how to carry out solidarity effectively," continued Rayson.

"Out of this work opportunities arose for deeper discussions with rank-and-file truck drivers leading to sales of the book. I participated in two house meetings with truck drivers and their families as a candidate. At one of these meetings

"I sold a copy of *Capitalism's World Disorder*. My socialist coworker was asked to go along with another truck driver as he worked. In the course of that another book was sold."

Paul Cornish is a member of the Union of Needletrades, Industrial and Textile Employees in Atlanta. He is also a member of the Young Socialists.



Militant/Greg McCartan

Selling *Capitalism's World Disorder* at rally in Columbia, South Carolina.

Caterpillar terminates union fighter

BY CAPPY KIDD

CHICAGO—"The only written documentation I have received in this whole process is the January 6 letter telling me I was terminated," said Bill Wheat. "I have done nothing wrong. There is no basis for the way Caterpillar is treating me. They are retaliating against me for defending unionism, human rights, and the rights of working people to be treated with dignity on the job."

Wheat is a member of United Auto Workers (UAW) Local 974 and has worked at Caterpillar for almost 30 years. He has a long history as a militant union fighter. He is a founding member and central leader of the Tactical Response Team, also known as Blue Shirts, which grew out of the struggles

has requested documentation the company claims it is basing the firing on, but has not received any. On January 9 Wheat attended the UAW Local 974 General Council meeting to state his case and request the local make a fact sheet available for distribution to union members. He also requested that the union provide an attorney to help fight his termination. Two days later, Wheat was informed that an assistant to UAW International vice-president Richard Shoemaker turned down his request for an attorney.

Supporters of Wheat's fight initiated a petition addressed to Shoemaker and began circulating it throughout Caterpillar plants in the Peoria area, requesting that the UAW International provide Wheat with an attorney.

"In the first 10 days, 300 to 400 Cat workers signed the petition," said Tom Smith, a member of Wheat's local. "Even a number of those who crossed the picket line during the strike have signed the petition. They know that the company dumped on them right after we came back from the strike. They realize the error they made and that their only hope is to try and reconstruct the union."



Jim Fisher

Bill Wheat

and strikes by the UAW against Caterpillar's antiunion drive over the past decade.

Wheat was initially suspended by Caterpillar December 23 and told the action was pending termination for allegedly threatening a high-ranking Caterpillar official. Two days earlier, Wheat had been confronted on the job by Caterpillar's East Peoria vice-president, Jim Despain, initially over Despain's objection to the health-and-safety T-shirt Wheat was wearing. Despain told Wheat that the plant has an excellent safety record. Wheat responded by inquiring about John Stein, another employee who had died earlier that week as a result of a workplace injury.

According to Wheat, after walking away, Despain returned and told Wheat, "Get this in your head. Don't ever talk to me like that and never use that body language to me or else."

Caterpillar has contested Wheat's application for unemployment benefits. On January 22, the unionist was notified that the Illinois Department of Employment Services has denied his application for compensation pending further investigation.

While defending Wheat, his union local

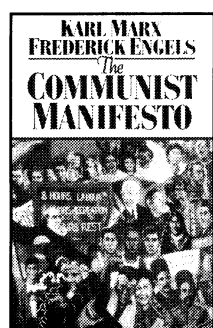
CORRECTION

A couple of paragraphs were accidentally omitted from the speech "Youth must march in the vanguard" by Ernesto Che Guevara published in the print edition of the January 31 *Militant* (the web version is correct). The passage on page 10 beginning with the last paragraph in the second column should have read as follows:

"You will automatically be youth, as well as representatives of the most advanced youth. Those who are young, young in spirit especially, don't ever have to worry about what to do in order to please others. Just do what is necessary, what seems logical at the time. That's how youth will become leaders."

"Today we have begun a process of, let us say, politicizing this ministry. The Ministry of Industry is really cold, a very bureaucratic place, a nest of nitpicking bureaucrats and bores, from the minister on down, who are constantly tackling concrete tasks in order to search for new relationships and new attitudes."

"Now, the youth organization here was complaining that even though they had organized things, this place was empty on the days when I didn't show up, and they wanted me to raise this. Well, I can raise it, but I can't tell anyone to come here."



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SWP leaders discuss campaigns, priorities

BY PATRICK O'NEILL

NEW YORK—What are the next steps in building a communist movement integrated into the struggles of working people in the cities and the countryside? This question was addressed at a January 22–23 meeting of the National Committee of the Socialist Workers Party. In his report entitled “Party Campaigns and Restructuring of Party Work,” Norton Sandler introduced a discussion on campaigns that will help win new members to the communist movement among young people, working farmers, and workers as the party is strengthened.

Sandler, from San Francisco, is a leader of the SWP and a member of its Trade Union Committee. This committee is responsible for a campaign led through the trade union fractions of the party to distribute *Capitalism's World Disorder: Working-Class Politics at the Millennium*.

“Since September the SWP and Young Socialists joined forces to sell the book and to place it in libraries and shops where many people will see it for the first time. Our aim in this campaign is to introduce the book to those engaged in struggles, and to work with them in bringing the book to other fighters either directly or by placing it in outlets.

“We have found that when we do it right, selling *Capitalism's World Disorder* lays the basis for a serious discussion on the depth of the capitalist crisis and the need for working people to overthrow the rule of the exploiters,” said Sandler.

He gave a number of examples, such as in early October when a farmers’ cooperative member and political fighter in Georgia “wrote a report of a successful trip to promote Pathfinder titles in that state,” said Sandler. This work with socialists from Atlanta was part of helping to recruit a new member to the Young Socialists in south Georgia as well.

Read and discuss with fighters

An auto workers union member at Caterpillar in Peoria, Illinois, who has been reading the *Militant* every week told a socialist worker from Chicago that until fairly recently he had skipped over the Cuba part and focused mainly on the labor solidarity articles. Reading *Capitalism's World Disorder* has clarified what the Cuban revolution is all about. “Now when I read the *Militant*, I read the Cuba articles as well.”

Socialist workers and students sold 89 copies of the book in the “clash of ideas” in the streets of Seattle during the meeting of the World Trade Organization in early December. Sandler also noted sales by members of the United Steelworkers of America (USWA) to workers either currently on strike or recently involved in struggles.

Discussing this report, Cynthia Baker, a St. Louis-area garment worker, described the discussions socialists from there have been having with a recently retired coal miner who is reading the book and wants to help



Militant

Socialist Workers Party leadership meeting extended campaign to sell *Capitalism's World Disorder* until March 15, to build on accomplishments of getting this book out and beginning to discuss it with those engaged in struggle. Above, selling the *Militant*.

circulate it to other miners.

“Where we have really taken up the campaign in the right spirit,” commented Sandler, “it is not just a ‘sales drive’ but a vehicle for becoming more one with the struggles and experiences of working people.

“Since the book was printed last March, 4,000 copies have been distributed around the world. From beginning of September until the end of the year, 800 were sold to individuals or placed in bookstores, through the direct efforts of socialist workers and Young Socialists. Pathfinder’s business office reports these efforts resulted in the publishing house winning 114 new accounts during this period.

“Socialists working in the United Transportation Union (UTU) and the International Association of Machinists (IAM) exceeded their goals they set both in selling the book, and in placing it in stores and libraries,” said Sandler. “Those working in the Union of Needletrades, Industrial and Textile Employees union made their goal of selling to individuals, and socialist workers in the United Steelworkers of America union came close.” In total the industrial union fractions of the party sold 203 copies of *Capitalism's World Disorder* to individuals out of their goal of 224. They placed 229 of their goal of 307.

Three meetings of socialists in the meatpacking, garment and textile, and coal mining industries proposed the campaign be continued into March.

Taking the recommendation of these na-

tional industrial fraction meetings, the National Committee voted to extend the campaign through March 15. “The Spanish-language edition of the book that will be printed in early February, and the French-language version due out a month later, will add powerful new ingredients into the campaign,” said Sandler. “Let’s start taking orders for the Spanish and French now,” he said.

Sandler said the party should use the extension of the campaign on *Capitalism's World Disorder* to help the Young Socialists win new members. Joining the YS on campus book tables to engage youth in political discussions, is one of the most important and pressing tasks facing the communist movement in the coming months.

“Last year’s experience reminds us of the value of building a long-term readership for working-class literature and newspapers,” said Sandler. “A good effort on the book campaign will put us in a strong position to launch an eight-week drive to increase the circulation, and especially the subscriber base, of the *Militant* and *Perspectiva Mundial* in the spring.” This circulation drive will run from March 25 to May 21.

Strengthening party finances

During the latter half of last year the SWP also made progress in stabilizing and centralizing its finances, Sandler reported. Since last April, SWP branches and branch organizing committees have reduced their total back debt to the party’s national office from over \$19,000 to under \$10,000. By the end

of December, 11 party units were completely debt-free, and the average contribution per member sent to the National Office each week was over \$10 by year’s end, the target the National Committee had set for the fall.

“The basis has been laid for setting and achieving further goals along the same lines during this year,” said Sandler. The National Committee adopted his proposal to aim to lower the back debt to \$5,000, to raise the number of debt-free branches from 11 to 16, and to raise the weekly contribution per member to the National Office to \$10.75 by the end of June.

Several participants in the discussion emphasized that the financial priorities “start with the needs of the party nationally.” Paul Mailhot said that principle should guide major decisions of socialists organized in any given area or unit. “We have to start by asking: ‘what best fits the needs of the party nationally, not what best fits our needs viewed locally?’” he said. “This should guide us in major decisions like a shift to a new headquarters and bookstore.”

The SWP has moved to establish several smaller units in more geographic areas where struggles are taking place, especially outside of the big cities and where strongholds of key industries like coal mining, meatpacking, and garment are to be found.

In cities with an established party branch, the old offices are often too large and expensive for the today’s needs. They have become a millstone and a shift to a new location can help break habits that developed the past 15 years during the retreat of the labor movement. A location that fits the party’s current size and resources breaks the routine and helps spur socialists out into political struggles and discussions, many of which are taking place in rural areas.

“Our headquarters should be organizing centers and launching pads for those who want to participate in struggles and sell socialist literature. Socialist workers and Young Socialist activists take pride in these facilities, and ensure they are open and available within the limits of our time and resources. And socialists ensure the security of these premises as well.”

Contribution of supporters

Sandler described the immense contribution that supporters of the SWP are making today. He highlighted the success of the financial campaign to raise monthly contributions to the party from supporters. Since the beginning of last summer they have increased the amount they are contributing to the party annually from \$125,000 to more than \$220,000. Socialist workers are confident that this can be expanded further with real attention in every area.

Sandler saluted the nearly 150 volunteers around the world working on the Pathfinder Reprint Project. This is a “large-scale and long-term effort,” he said. The first stage of it is “to convert the 350 titles in Pathfinder’s catalog into digital files.” This allows shorter, higher quality, and more timely runs of books in Pathfinder’s printshop.

“Some 150 supporters have formed themselves into a veritable army in this project,” said Sandler. This includes volunteers in several other countries. Through the initiatives and dedication of the supporters of the communist movement, the reprint project has scored some notable victories. Scan2000 was a key milestone.” By the end of 1999 the volunteers met their goal of getting every Pathfinder title scanned. “They are confident they can soon turn out seven, eight, or nine books to the printshop each month.

“There are two central ways that we ask every supporter to maximize their own and the international movement’s striking power: by joining the Pathfinder reprint project and winning monthly financial contributors for the national party needs,” he said. “Every party unit needs to discuss these two goals with the supporters at each monthly meeting,” said Sandler.

Reading, discussing, and working on political developments, responding as working-class politicians and fighters—these are essential to winning new members of the Young Socialists and the party.

Socialist workers in the UTU, USWA, IAM, and United Auto Workers will meet February 5–6 in Birmingham and Los Angeles. They will be discussing these campaigns, how to deepen their work in their unions to build solidarity with strikes and social struggles, and how to be effective in bringing a socialist perspective and explanation to co-workers and other fighters.

Fund launched for new bindery equipment

BY NORTON SANDLER

NEW YORK—“The next step forward in the Pathfinder printshop will be the purchase of new bindery stitching equipment. We have launched a drive to raise \$200,000 by the end of April,” said Dave Prince, the director of the Capital Fund.

Prince, along with Doug Nelson who heads the shop’s bindery, explained in a January 26 interview that the shop is in the middle of one of the most intense stretches of printing Pathfinder titles in its history. “The Spanish edition of *Capitalism's World Disorder* was turned into the print shop today,” Prince said. “The new Pathfinder title *Che Guevara Talks to Young People* in both English and Spanish was turned into the shop a few days ago. These new books will be off the press and ready to be shipped in a week. We are also working on several other titles at the same time.

“The digital state-of-the-art computer-to-plate equipment purchases we have made over the past year and half as a result of Capital Fund contributions, along with major improvements in the staff’s mastery of this new technology, have been pivotal to the shop volunteers being able to make these quick turnarounds. Our quality has improved and our costs are lower,” Prince said.

These advances, added Prince, enable the shop staff to respond to the stepped-up pace being set by the some 150 volunteers around

the world who are preparing Pathfinder’s entire list of nearly 350 books in electronic format and who are striving to reduce the number of the publishing house’s titles that are out of print.

“As soon as the capital can be raised, we will make a down payment on a new stitcher,” he said.

“A stitcher takes printed signatures and collates, staples, and trims them in line,” Nelson explained. “We purchased a used stitcher in the mid-1980s. It does not meet our needs today. It takes too long to prepare the setup for every new job and it is designed specifically for long print runs.”

“We have a three-month training period for new members of the shop staff,” said Nelson. “We don’t expect any of the new staff members to master this particular machine during their probationary period, which is a problem, since they can learn to operate all the other pieces of our bindery equipment in that amount of time. This will be possible with the new stitcher.”

The shop will soon choose between the two different manufacturers they have been researching. “We want equipment that first and foremost makes it possible to print Pathfinder books and pamphlets and periodicals. Both pieces of equipment we are looking at fit our requirement for stitching in a cost-effective way the relatively small runs of pamphlets, bulletins, and periodicals pro-

duced in the shop,” Nelson stated.

Modern stitchers are designed to minimize the use of hand tools and measurements, said Nelson. “They are operated with handset adjustments and the onboard computer walks the operator through the setup process. This helps in training new operators and to cut down setup time. With these advances in technology the skills needed for our stitching will be much less,” Nelson emphasized.

Prince explained that the shop has made progress expanding its customer base as it goes through this transition. “We are going to use a substantial portion of the \$200,000 Capital Fund to initially cover operating expenses over the next few months as we continue to widen our customer base. This money will be reallocated to Capital Fund needs as rapidly as possible,” Prince added.

Many contributions to the fund come from individuals working in industry who receive bonuses from the bosses. Recently nine rail workers at Amtrak contributed more than \$15,000 to the fund from the retroactive pay raises and signing bonuses they received after the union there ratified a new contract. Other contributions to the fund come from trust funds, inheritance, and accident settlements. For more information on how you can help, or send a contribution, contact the Capital Fund, 410 West St., New York, NY 10014-2570.

Popular rebellion erupts across Ecuador

Continued from front page

of indigenous and other organizations have pledged to continue their fight for justice.

Thousands of unionists, students, peasants, and others blocked roads and staged rallies for days, leading up to January 21, calling for Mahuad's resignation. The government deployed 35,000 soldiers and police around the country in an attempt to maintain order and prevent peasants and other working people in rural areas from reaching Quito. According to some reports, as many as 25,000 indigenous people had entered the capital city from around the country to protest. "We want justice so that we can live, so that our children can go to school, so that we can have healthy lives," said Pedro Jami, a farmer who walked 60 miles overnight from the province of Cotopaxi into Quito.

In Guayaquil, the capital of Guayas province where rebellious sentiments run deep, trade unions, student groups, and indigenous and community organizations occupied the main government building. "The January 21 demonstration of more than 2,000 people lasted for two hours and paralyzed the main streets," said Hugo Yulán, a student participant in the action, in a January 26 telephone interview with the *Militant* from Guayaquil. "We established a popular assembly," he added. "It lasted a few hours, until the military took over and removed everyone out of the government building."

Rulers unite to end their nightmare

Yulán, also a youth coordinator of the Organization of Rice Producers of Guayas (OPAG), said that students, workers, and peasants feel betrayed but that "we'll be ready to mobilize again whenever another action is called." He referred to the statement by Vargas who has given the new government three to six months to meet popular demands or face a new revolt. The ruling class in Guayaquil decided to unite to end their nightmare of a popular uprising. Representatives of the military, big entrepreneurs, and other conservative and liberal parties met at the house of former president Febres Cordero, a well known rightist, and decided to intervene in order to end the occupation by students and working people.

Earlier, taxi and bus drivers had stopped service in Guayas. They were protesting the increase of fees and tolls. Meanwhile, the indigenous communities in Tungurahua, Chimborazo, and Cotopaxi had started to block highways to prepare for the big mobilization. In Quito, the Unified Workers Front, with 600,000 members, launched a series of protests despite the state of emergency declared by Mahuad. Similar actions took place in Guayaquil and Cuenca.

Many protest leaders gave working people the false impression that they could

trust the military. After 5,000 occupied Congress and the Supreme Court in Quito January 21, and the three-person junta was declared in power, protesters celebrated, placing the banner of the Indigenous peoples atop the Congress building and encouraging a march to the presidential palace.

Hours later the ruling class countered through General Mendoza. The defense minister announced the end of the junta and resigned from his post, saying he took that step only "to prevent a blood bath." Top military officers said they opted against attacking protesters, and a number gave the impression of joining the demonstrators, to avoid "a social explosion." Mendoza was more forthcoming later, indicating that the formation of the junta was just a "strategy" to demobilize the thousands of indigenous people who had taken control of Congress, the Supreme Court, and the Presidential Palace, and denying he supported the uprising.

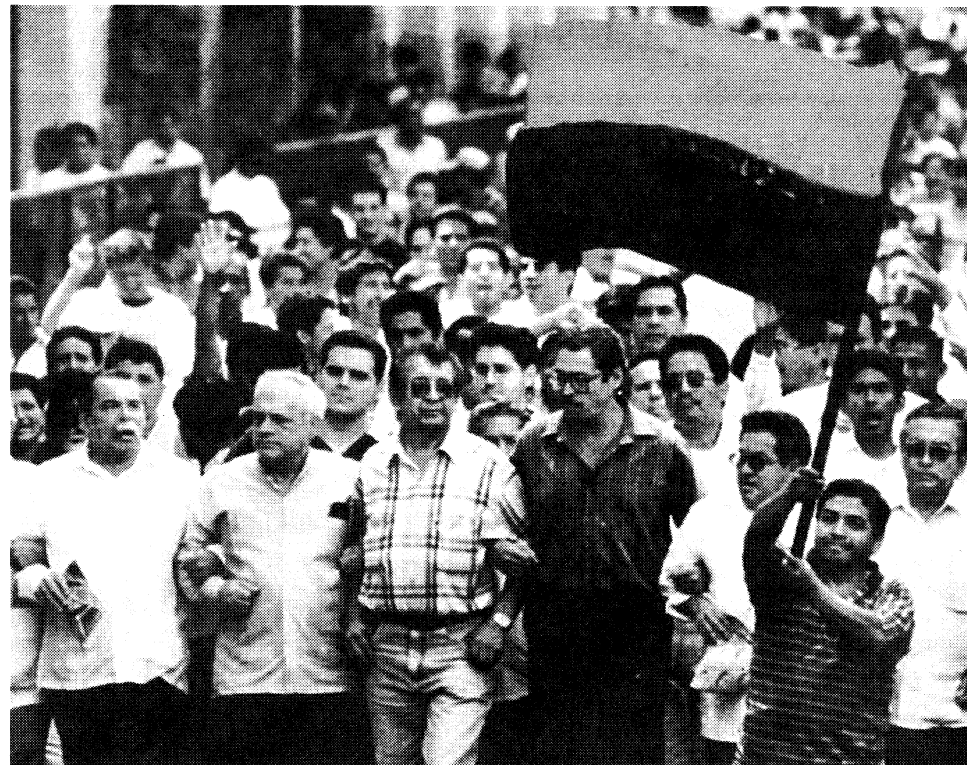
'We'll continue the struggle'

"We'll continue the struggle," Vargas told *El Universo* of Guayaquil. "We could march again on Quito. We will be even much stronger by then." Many leaders of indigenous organizations do not recognize Noboa's government and called the generals betrayers. "The three generals betrayed the country, betrayed the people, broke their word of honor," said Vargas in a January 24 press conference in Quito. They believe the new president will try to deal with the country's economic crisis using policies similar to his predecessor. In fact, Noboa stated he will go ahead with the "dollarization" plan of the previous government. "If they don't back off [with the dollarization] there may be a great social explosion and even a civil war," warned Vargas.

In the mountainous highlands, marches of indigenous peoples filled the streets. In Riobamba, a demonstration to reject turning power over to Noboa extended 20 blocks from downtown. Protesters armed with sticks and other objects carried signs rejecting dollarization and government plans to sell off state-owned enterprises to foreign investors.

In Ambato, the population rejected the new government with street actions and called the generals who backed the short-lived junta betrayers. Luis Miniguano, a leader of the Indigenous Movement of Tungurahua, said actions in that region will continue with the support of teachers and other workers. Troops and police hurled tear gas grenades against demonstrators at a nearby church, hurting women, children, and pedestrians.

In Latacunga, the main representative of the Indigenous Movement of Cotopaxi, Pablo Ante, acknowledged that leaders of the popular movement made three mistakes,



Protest on January 10 in Guayaquil, Ecuador, after "dollarization" was announced. Trade unions, student groups, and indigenous and community organizations formed a "popular assembly" there for several hours January 21, reported a student participant.

"putting too much trust in the military, who lied to the people and favored the rich as usual; not preparing in a timely way; and not negotiating as politicians with the politicians." Ante also added that now "there is nothing else to do but to put pressure on the new president to meet the 10 demands of CONAIE, among them fighting corruption, lowering interest rates, creating more jobs, transforming and not privatizing state enterprises, enacting a moratorium on the foreign debt, and creating popular parliaments in the provinces." Working people have maintained the occupation of the courthouse and the main government building in Latacunga as of January 23, and have continued to block the highways and a bridge that connects that city with the road to Quito.

When Mahuad stated January 10 that he would attempt to push dollarization through, in order to curb inflation and attract foreign investors, the sucre had already been devalued 18.6 percent since New Year's Day. In 1999, the sucre dropped more than 70 percent against the dollar and the economy contracted 7 percent. The banking system was considered insolvent. Ecuador is saddled with a foreign debt of \$13 billion, owed primarily to banks in imperialist centers.

Last September, Ecuador's rulers defaulted on bond debt payments. Around that time, Mahuad promised more severe austerity measures in order to get an International Monetary Fund (IMF) loan. The Noboa gov-

ernment announced it will go ahead with replacing the sucre with the U.S. dollar. An IMF delegation headed by John Thorton already met with Noboa to discuss implementation of such a move.

The plan to exchange the sucre for dollars at a rate of 25,000 to one will drastically cut wages. The minimum wage, for example, will drop under \$30 a month compared to more than double that figure six months ago.

These measures have already devastated the livelihoods of millions of working people, hitting especially the indigenous peoples that include 11 nationalities and comprise 45 percent of Ecuador's 12.4 million population. A large group of Quichua-speaking communities live in the central highlands. They rely mainly on agriculture while others driven off their lands live on the coast.

Another group of more than 100,000 comprise six indigenous nationalities who live in the Amazon jungle and subsist by harvesting the rain forest soils. The main sources of Ecuador's staples, 70 percent, come from indigenous and *campesino* communities, and small farmers who own less than 25 acres of land per family.

Concentration of land ownership

Land is concentrated in the hands of a few rich landowners. In the highlands, according to a 1994 report, 1.6 percent of farms occupy 43 percent of the land. On the coast, 3.9 percent occupy 55 percent. Lands owned communally represent only 4 percent in the highlands in the steep mountains that produce only pasture. With the highest inflation in Latin America and with only one out of three workers having full-time jobs, the indigenous say they can barely subsist with \$4 a month per family they get from selling their crops on the market.

Land ownership and use has been a key question for the indigenous peoples who have led uprisings throughout the years to assert this right. In June 1994, under the government of Sixto Durán Ballén, a mobilization shut down the country for two weeks. His government adopted a new Agrarian Development Law that called for the elimination of communal lands, ignoring the interests of indigenous people and small farmers and favoring the rich landowners. At that time, trade unions called a general strike, while the indigenous organizations set up roadblocks and boycotts in the markets around the country. In the Amazon, they occupied oil wells to protest privatization of Petroecuador, the state oil company.

The government declared a "State of Emergency" calling on the army to restore order. The armed forces occupied indigenous communities and unleashed a brutal crackdown, destroying homes and crops, and beating women and youth. Far from backing down, the mobilization forced the government to agree to revise the new agrarian law. Some of CONAIE's proposals were incorporated into the revisions. That action gave the indigenous movement social power and prestige and has placed them in the forefront of struggles of working people in Ecuador.

Now in Swedish: 'U.S. Imperialism Lost the Cold War'

BY CATHARINA TIRSÉN

STOCKHOLM, Sweden—More than a dozen volunteers in Sweden and the United States have made possible the publication of the third issue of *Ny International*, the Swedish-language translation of the Marxist magazine *New International*.

Featured in the new issue is "USA-imperialismen har förlorat kalla kriget" (U.S. imperialism has lost the Cold War) by Jack Barnes; "Socialism: A Viable Option," by Cuban Communist Party leader José Ramón Balaguer; and the "Young Socialists Manifesto." It substantially increases the material available in Swedish for workers

and young people to gain an understanding of the social devastation, economic crises, and military assaults bred by the lawful workings of capitalism today—and how working people can forge the kind of parties needed to lead the struggle to transform this world.

This 328-page book will now be sold at workplaces and plant gates, schools, universities, and demonstrations, as well as at bookstores and libraries in Sweden.

In contrast to earlier issues of *Ny International*, this entire issue has been printed in Pathfinder's printshop in New York thanks to new technology. All of the editing, proofreading, and formatting was done in Sweden by Swedish-speaking volunteers. The entire magazine was burnt onto a CD and sent to New York where the computer-to-plate technology in the printshop has made it possible to print the pages exactly as they had been formatted, reducing the chance of introducing errors.

The cover—featuring the Pathfinder Mural depicting revolutionary fighters from around the world—was designed by Eva Braiman, a worker in Cleveland who volunteered weekends to work on it in New York. Matching the colors on the press to design specifications proved to be a challenge for the printshop—one the shop volunteers decided to use to take a step forward in using digital equipment.

Over several weeks shop volunteers worked with AGFA, the company that produces the state-of-the-art computer-to-plate

machine used in the shop, as well as companies that produce ink and maintain color standards. They worked to establish procedures whereby the digital process is calibrated to match numerical codes that allow the color chosen by the designer to be duplicated on the printed page without a lot of tests, saving time and allowing the cover to be reproduced exactly in later printings. The workers in the shop were successful in using industry color coding systems with the digital process, achieving results on the cutting edge of the printing industry.

When the *Ny International* cover came off the press, the clearness of all the faces on the mural adorning the cover, as well as the blue-green background, were of beautiful quality—what the designer and editor intended. This advance will improve the production of all Pathfinder book covers printed in the printshop; they can be printed exactly as they were designed on the computers, without trial and error on the press.

After finishing the job on *Ny International* no. 3, three of the volunteers who prepared it, all supporters of the Communist League in Sweden, joined the international reprint project to help put all 350 Pathfinder titles into electronic format so they can be kept in print. This work will also help these supporters learn skills that can be put to use when the next book in Swedish is published.

Catharina Tirsén is the editor of *Ny International* and a member of the Metal Workers Union in Stockholm.

NEW INTERNATIONAL NO. 11

❑ **U.S. Imperialism Has Lost the Cold War** by Jack Barnes

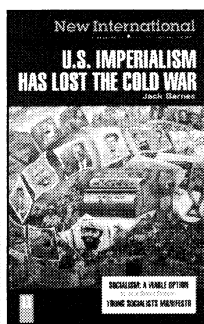
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'Che Guevara Talks to Young People'

Armando Hart's preface to new book of speeches by the revolutionary leader

We publish below the preface by Armando Hart Dávalos to the new Pathfinder title *Che Guevara Talks to Young People*, published simultaneously in English and Spanish. The introduction by Mary-Alice Waters appears on the facing page. The book contains eight speeches by Ernesto Che Guevara, one of the central leaders of the Cuban revolution.

Hart was a founding member of the July 26 Movement in 1955 and one of the leaders of its underground urban movement. The July 26 Movement and the Rebel Army, under the leadership of Fidel Castro, led the mass revolutionary struggle that in 1959 defeated the U.S.-backed dictatorship of Fulgencio Batista and opened the door to the first socialist revolution in the Americas. Hart was the national coordinator of the July 26 Movement from the beginning of 1957 to January 1958, when he was captured and jailed until the triumph of the revolution on January 1, 1959.

Over the last four decades Hart has served as Cuba's minister of education, organizational secretary of the Communist Party of Cuba, and minister of culture. He has been a member of the Central Committee of the Communist Party since its founding in 1965, and was a member of the Political Bureau from 1965 to 1986.

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BY ARMANDO HART DÁVALOS

Writing a preface to *Che Guevara Talks to Young People*—which has as an afterword Fidel's speech at the monument built in the center of the island to house the hero's sacred remains, together with those of his unforgettable comrades—constitutes for me both an honor and a genuine challenge. I will try to share with the young reader—to whom this book is largely directed—some necessarily brief thoughts on this outstanding figure of the Americas and of contemporary world history.

It's true that Che would speak much differently to young people today, who are living under very different conditions, than he did over three decades ago. Nevertheless, in rereading these talks, one is struck by how extremely relevant they are. These speeches confirm that Che is indeed a man of the present.

At the beginning of the 1990s it was said that all models for changing the world had disappeared, together with the possibility of finding new ones. The image of the He-

roic Guerrilla, however, rises throughout the Western world as a specter that continues to grow. And it will do so, with greater or lesser force and richness of ideas, to the extent that it reaches young people and they take up the essential part of his actions and aspirations.

José Carlos Mariátegui, one of Latin America's great revolutionary thinkers, studied and pointed to the need for myths. He pointed out how peoples who have accomplished great feats have had to create myths among the masses. If we want to be

for all time a sense of heroism, and of moral values in politics and history. And since the moral factor has been what's lacking in politics and has ended up leading to revolutions, there is one conviction of Che's that has been dramatically confirmed: without the moral factor, there is no revolution. He also spoke with eloquence, depth, and rigor about the need for a new man in the twenty-first century. Life itself has compelled this individual to be formed in the twentieth century. Recognizing the enormous role of culture and moral values in the history of civilization,

the so-called subjective factors to motivate and guide the revolutionary action of the masses and of society as a whole.

What is valuable and of interest from the standpoint of Marxism is that from this vantage point, Che got radically closer to Marx than did other interpretations of the ideas of the author of *Capital* that were prevalent during the second half of the twentieth century. The Third World perspective of the internationalist guerrilla fighters who fell in Bolivia was an implicit call to socialists to decisively orient their actions toward the

Third World. The wisdom of this political and moral course was not understood and supported at the time by those who could and should have done so. For this reason, the world changed along lines favorable to the most reactionary right, ending up in postmodern chaos.

In Che's speech in Algiers on February 24, 1964, this call took on a dramatic and polemical character. Tragically, history would prove who was right. The saddest thing for revolutionaries is that Che's position on the role of the previously colonized or neocolonized countries was closely in line with what Lenin had brilliantly foreseen decades earlier, pointing to the importance of liberation movements that were emerging in the East. Valuable literature exists by the person who forged the October Revolution, and it should be restudied at the present time.

The inadequacy of the social sciences under the prevailing sys-



Militant/Joseph Hansen
"How much capital do you need to begin an agrarian reform?" asked Che Guevara. "None. The only capital needed is an armed people conscious of their rights." Above, members of peasant militia march in Havana, April 1960. With the first agrarian reform law, 100,000 peasant families received titles to the land they worked.

revolutionaries in the strict sense of the word, we must study the reasons and the factors for why Che lives on in the hearts of the Americas and expresses, in a thousand different ways, the desires and aspirations of the most radical youth on various continents. Thirty-some years after his rise to immortality in the Yuro Ravine, his image resonates through plazas and streets, reviving his cry of "Ever onward to victory!" Finding the reasons behind these facts is the best way to uphold the ideas of socialism and the possibilities of revolutionary change.

The teachings and the example of Che's sacrifice in the jungles of Bolivia have etched in the minds of the new generations



Liborio Noval

Che Guevara had total confidence in working people's capacity to change the world and to transform themselves in the process. "Rally of the pencils" in Havana, Dec. 22, 1961, celebrating the success of the Literacy Campaign. Some 100,000 youth went all over Cuba to teach almost a million people how to read and write.

and extracting from it the necessary practical consequences is Commander Ernesto Che Guevara's most important message to young people. There is a history behind this. Civilization never made an analysis with the necessary depth, from a scientific viewpoint, of the role of moral and spiritual values over the course of history. That is the most important intellectual challenge that the twentieth century has left to youth.

In Europe, Western and Christian culture began to evolve before the year 1000 until it achieved, with Marx and Engels, the highest level of philosophic knowledge in relation to social and economic science. In Latin America and the Caribbean, meanwhile, a line of thinking crystallized—symbolized by Bolívar and Martí—that, on a scientific basis, emphasized the power of man and the role of education, culture, and politics. The originality of Ernesto Che Guevara—as with the Cuban Revolution—consists of the following: Inspired by the spiritual heritage of Our America, and starting with his commitment to moral values, he adopted the ideas of Marx and Engels, and advocated using

tem stems from the fact that they ignore one decisive reality: today's growing poverty, the root of the evils and anguish suffered by modern man, together with the destruction of nature. Overcoming this situation is man's greatest challenge as the twenty-first century dawns. From the scientific viewpoint, taking up this issue—rather than pretending it doesn't exist—is the essence of an ethical system that aspires to be built on solid foundations for the future. Ignoring human pain is the great crime of the social systems that currently exist. We are realists, but for us the reality of man is complete and whole, not partial and mean, which is the way the existing interests see reality.

Che saw and appraised reality from an ethical standpoint—in order to improve it. That is where the power of the myth he left us resides. His ideas combine the most advanced thinking of European philosophical thought—Marx and Engels—with the utopian vision of Our America—Bolívar and Martí.

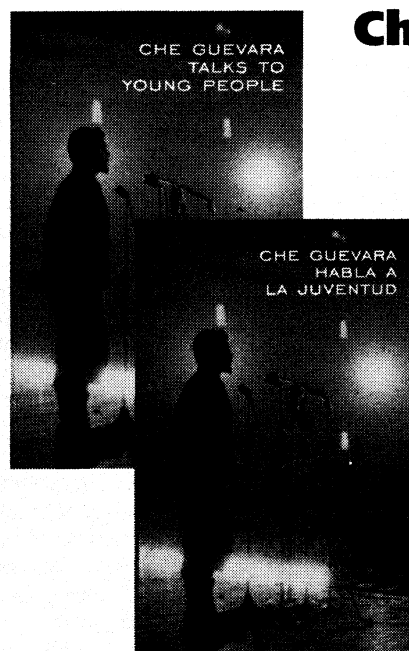
The error of those who renounce utopia

Continued on Page 10

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"We are attacked a great deal because of what we are. But we are attacked much, much more because we show to every nation of the Americas what it's possible to be. What's important for imperialism—much more than Cuba's nickel mines or sugar mills, or Venezuela's oil, or Mexico's cotton, or Chile's copper, or Argentina's cattle, or Paraguay's grasslands, or Brazil's coffee—is the totality of these raw materials upon which the monopolies feed."

—Che Guevara, July 28, 1960

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Che speaks as equal with youth of Cuba and world

We publish below the introduction by Mary-Alice Waters to *Che Guevara Talks to Young People*, which Pathfinder has just published in English and Spanish.

Waters, who oversaw the editing of this book, is the president of Pathfinder Press and editor of *New Internationalist*, a magazine of Marxist politics and theory.

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All the members of the Cuban government—young in age, young in character, and young in their illusions—have nevertheless matured in the extraordinary school of experience, in living contact with the needs and aspirations of the people.

Ernesto Che Guevara

July 28, 1960

BY MARY-ALICE WATERS

Che Guevara Talks to Young People is not a "Che for Beginners." The legendary Argentine-born revolutionary, who helped lead the first socialist revolution in the Americas and initiate the renewal of Marxism in the 1960s, speaks as an equal with the youth of Cuba and the world. He never talks down. He sets an example as he urges young people to rise to the level of revolutionary activity and scientific thought necessary to confront and resolve the historic contradictions of capitalism that threaten humanity.

He challenges them to work—physically and intellectually. To learn to be disciplined. To become revolutionaries of action, fearlessly taking their place in the vanguard on the front lines of struggles, small and large. He urges them, as they grow and change through these experiences, to read widely and study seriously. To absorb, and to make their own, the scientific and cultural achievements not only of their own people but of all previous civilizations. To aspire to be revolutionary combatants, knowing that a different kind of society can be born only out of struggles by men and women ready to put their lives and their lifetimes on the line for it. He appeals to them to politicize the work of the organizations and institutions they are part of, and in the process politicize themselves. To become a different kind of human being as they strive together with working people of all lands to transform the world. And along this line of march, he encourages them to continuously renew and revel in the spontaneity, freshness, optimism, and joy of being young.

'Truly a communist'

"Che was truly a communist," Cuban president Fidel Castro told the solemn assembly in the city of Santa Clara on October 17, 1997, as the remains of Guevara and six of his fellow combatants were interred at the site of a memorial in their honor, thirty years after they fell in combat in Bolivia. Che based himself on objective laws, Castro said, the laws of history, and had unqualified confidence in the capacity of human beings, ordinary working people, to change the course of history. In the process of making a socialist revolution on the doorstep of Yankee imperialism, Che insisted, the workers and peasants of Cuba would remake themselves as social beings with a new consciousness, a new set of values, a new world view, a transformed relationship to one another. They would set an example for all.

In his preface to these speeches, Armando Hart underscores that on this question as on others, Guevara—and the Cuban Revolution he was part of—came "radically closer to Marx" than most of those in the second half of the twentieth century who claimed to speak in the name of communism. "If this revolution is Marxist," Guevara told the nine hundred participants in the First Latin American Youth Congress in the summer of 1960, it is "because it discovered, by its own methods, the road

pointed out by Marx." Deeply rooted in the history, culture, and politics of his Latin American homeland, Guevara brought to that social reality and its traditions of struggle a scientific understanding of the universal laws of the history of class societies. He combined a renewal of Marxist orthodoxy in theory with the example of physical and moral courage that earned him the name, the Heroic Guerrilla.

In the pages that follow, Guevara draws frequently on his own experiences to explain to others why the image of the lone, self-sacrificing hero—the image in which many later tried to remake himself—is nothing but the exaltation of bourgeois individualism, the flip side of the coin of the dog-eat-dog reality of capitalism. It is the opposite of the revolutionary cooperative course of the toilers, the course that made the Cuban Revolution possible.

Speaking to a group of medical students and health workers in August 1960, Guevara describes how his youthful idealism when he was studying to be a doctor led him to dream of being a famous researcher, "of working tirelessly to achieve something



Members of Union of Young Communists participate in voluntary work to repair housing, Havana, 1992. Scientific clarity and an uncompromising dialectical materialism link Guevara to Marx, who insisted that "circumstances are changed by men and that the educator must himself be educated." Human nature is not an immutable characteristic of human beings as individuals, but "the ensemble of the social relations."

that could really be put at the disposal of humanity, but that would be a personal triumph at the same time. I was, as we all are, a child of my environment."

As he traveled throughout the Americas, however, and learned firsthand of the economic, social, and political realities of imperialist domination, he came to recognize the futility of such a course. "The isolated effort, the individual effort, the purity of ideals, the desire to sacrifice an entire lifetime to the noblest of ideals—all that is for naught if the effort is made alone, solitary, in some corner of Latin America, fighting against hostile governments and social conditions that permit no progress.

"A revolution," Guevara said, "needs what we have in Cuba: an entire people who are mobilized, who have learned the use of arms and the practice of unity in combat."

Before he could be a revolutionary doctor, there was a revolution to be made. Once set on that line of march, Guevara never turned back.

From a young student rebel attracted to revolutionary ideas, Guevara—like other great communist leaders before him, starting with Marx and Engels themselves—was won to the popular revolutionary vanguard fighting arms in hand for liberation from oppression, exploitation, and all the accompanying indignities. Along that trajectory of revolutionary action by the toilers combined with systematic, disciplined, hard work and study, Guevara emerged as one of



Granma

Che Guevara addresses second anniversary of unification of revolutionary youth organizations, Oct. 20, 1962. Che challenges youth to work physically and intellectually, to be disciplined, to become revolutionaries of action, to read widely, to study seriously. He appeals to them to politicize the work of the organizations and institutions they are part of, and to politicize themselves in the process.

the foremost proletarian leaders of our epoch. The opening of the first socialist revolution in the Americas, whose victory Guevara helped to assure, the example of internationalism set by the entire leadership of the revolution, and Guevara's own contributions captured in speeches and writings he left us, initiated a renewal of Marxism that was not limited to the Americas.

By consistently taking the political and theoretical conquests of Marx, Engels, and Lenin as his guide, by making the early years following the October 1917 revolu-

helped those he worked with comprehend the class character of all such questions.

Among the many delightfully rich moments readers will encounter in the speeches that follow is Guevara's lesson in the practical connection between the class foundations of ethics and aesthetics. Speaking to architecture students in 1963, and explaining that technology is a weapon that serves different classes for different ends, Che pointed to a mural on the wall of the auditorium. He remarked that there is a weapon depicted in the mural, "a U.S.-made M-1, a Garand rifle. When it was in the hands of Batista's soldiers and they were firing on us, that weapon was hideous. But that same weapon became extraordinarily beautiful when we captured it, when we wrested it from a soldier's hands, when it became part of the arsenal of the people's army. In our hands it became an object of dignity."

Unyielding dialectical materialism

A similar thread of scientific clarity and an uncompromising dialectical materialism on questions such as education and human nature, links Guevara to fundamental writings of Marx, such as his 1845 "Theses on Feuerbach." Criticizing the mechanical materialism of some of the progressive bourgeois forces of the time, Marx wrote: "The materialist doctrine concerning the changing of circumstances and upbringing forgets that circumstances are changed by men and that the educator must himself be educated." Human nature is not an immutable characteristic of human beings considered as abstract individuals, he said, but concretely "the ensemble of the social relations."

In his farewell remarks to the international volunteer work brigades, Guevara asks: "Have the people of this country made a revolution because that's just the way they are?"

"Absolutely not," he answers.

"The people are the way they are because they are in the midst of a revolution." Through their actions, they are forging different social relations and a different understanding of themselves and the world—thus becoming different individuals, creating a different "human nature," on the road to becoming socialist men and women.

"We learned to respect the peasant," Guevara told the Latin American Youth Congress in July 1960. "We learned to respect his sense of independence, his loyalty; to recognize his age-old yearning for the land that had been snatched from him; and to recognize his experience in the thousand paths through the hills.

"And from us, the peasants learned how valuable a man is when he has a rifle in his hand, and when he is prepared to fire that rifle at another man, regardless of how many rifles the other man has. The peasants taught us their know-how," Guevara said, "and we taught the peasants our sense of rebellion. And from that moment until today, and forever, the peasants of Cuba and the rebel forces of Cuba—today the Cuban revolutionary government—have marched united as one."

Youth must march in the vanguard, Guevara insists throughout, taking on the hardest tasks in every endeavor. That is the only road toward becoming leaders of other women and men—just as the officers in the Rebel Army won their stripes on the battlefield. Youth must learn to lead not only their

Che speaks as equal with youth of Cuba

peers, but revolutionists older than themselves as well. You must be a model "for older men and women who have lost some of that youthful enthusiasm, who have lost a certain faith in life, and who always respond well to example," Guevara told the UJC leaders in October 1962.

Above all, you must be political. "To be apolitical is to turn one's back on every movement in the world," he says to the international meeting of architecture students.

And to the youth working at the Ministry of Industry—which he himself headed at the time—Guevara explained the need to "politicize the ministry." That is the only way you can fight to change it from being a "cold, a very bureaucratic place, a nest of nitpicking bureaucrats and bores, from the minister on down, who are constantly tackling concrete tasks in order to search for new relationships and new attitudes," he told them. Only by bringing the broadest world and class perspectives—and the most uncompromising acceptance of the laws of motion of modern history—into the most routine of tasks can you counter the depoliticizing, bureaucratizing pressures of day-to-day existence that can undermine the morale, confidence, and combativity of even the best revolutionary fighters.

No one can be a leader, Guevara told the UJC cadres, "if you think about the revolution only at the moment of decisive sacrifice, at the moment of combat, of heroic adventure, at moments that are out of the ordinary, yet in your work you are mediocre or less than mediocre. How can that be?"

If "politicize the ministry" is one part of the answer he gives, voluntary work is another.

"Why do we emphasize voluntary work so much?" asks Guevara. "Economically it means practically nothing." But it is "important today because these individuals are giving a part of their lives to society without expecting anything in return.... This is the first step in transforming work into what it will eventually become, as a result of the advance of technology, the advance of production, and the advance of the relations of production: an activity of a higher level, a social necessity" that we will look forward to in the way we now anticipate a Sunday off.

Along that line of march "you will automatically become the youth's vanguard," Guevara told the UJC members at the Ministry of Industry. You will never have to sit



Photos: Granma

Above: Fidel Castro addresses Oct. 17, 1997, ceremony in Santa Clara to commemorate the return of the remains of Guevara and other combatants who fought and died in Bolivia in 1967. To his left are Raúl Castro, minister of the Revolutionary Armed Forces, and Carlos Lage, vice-president of the Council of State. Left: Tens of thousands participated in the ceremony. "Che was truly a communist," said the Cuban president. "Today he is an example, a model of what a revolutionary is, what a communist is."



the ample cooperation of Casa Editora Abril, the publishing house of the Union of Young Communists in Cuba, whose director enthusiastically supported the project

cially helpful.

"To the powerful masters we represent all that is absurd, negative, irreverent, and disruptive in this America that they so despise and scorn," Guevara told the students at the University of Havana in March 1960. But to the great mass of the people of the Americas, "we represent everything noble, sincere and combative."

Forty years later those words continue to ring true. Guevara's talks with young people continue to point the way forward—the way toward becoming revolutionary combatants of the highest caliber, and, in his own words, "politicians of a new type."

Mary-Alice Waters

around engaging in theoretical discussions about what youth should be doing. "Stay young, don't transform yourselves into old theoreticians, or theorizers, maintain the freshness and enthusiasm of youth."

The simultaneous publication of *Che Guevara Talks to Young People* in both Spanish and English was made possible by

from its inception in February 1998. He contributed his time and knowledge to help select the texts, as well as to review the annotation and introductory materials. Rafaela Valerino, head of the editorial department at Casa Editora Abril, supervised the preparation of the electronic files of the speeches, and reviewed the entire manuscript. While the efforts of Casa Editora Abril have increased the accuracy and readability of the book, for which we are grateful, Pathfinder takes full responsibility for all the editorial decisions and thus any errors that remain.

Special appreciation is also owed to Aleida March, director of Che's Personal Archive, for her cooperation and insightful suggestions on the selection of both the speeches and photos.

The invaluable photo signature and internal photo pages were assembled with the help and knowledge of Delfin Xiqués of *Granma*, Manuel Martínez of *Bohemia*, and Juan Moreno of *Juventud Rebelde*.

Readers who are unfamiliar with many of the names and historical events referred to throughout will find the glossary notes and list of further reading at the end especially helpful.

Preface to 'Che Guevara Talks to Young People'

Continued from Page 8

is in not considering the real needs that emerge from the facts that lie beneath the surface. For this reason, they are unable to conceive of tomorrow's truths.

The essence of the Latin American culture present in Che's revolutionary ideas consists of viewing reality and the effort to change it as indispensable elements for understanding truth and transforming the world in the interests of justice, while at the same time taking the New World's utopian sense and converting it into an incentive for forging tomorrow's reality. Che did not renounce either reality or hope. He was a revolutionary of science and of conscience, both of which are needed by the Americas and the world in order to confront the challenge we face in the next century.

Study carefully these works by Che and, whether you are students or other youth, you will find a good lesson for the present and for the future.

Armando Hart Dávalos
December 1999

For further reading...

Throughout *Che Guevara Talks to Young People*, readers will come across references to historical events, speeches, and individuals that may be unfamiliar. The following are suggestions for further reading.

Castro, Fidel, "The Case of Cuba Is the Case of All Underdeveloped Countries," Speech to the General Assembly of the United Nations, September 26, 1960. In *To Speak the Truth: Why Washington's 'Cold War' against Cuba Doesn't End* (Pathfinder, 1992).

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Lenin, V.I., writings and speeches on the national and colonial question. In *Workers of the World and Oppressed Peoples, Unite! Proceedings and Documents of the Second Congress of the Communist International, 1920* (Pathfinder, 1991); and *To See the Dawn, Baku 1920: First Congress of the Peoples of the East* (Pathfinder, 1993).

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Marx, Karl, *Critique of the Gotha Program* (International Publishers, 1966).

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The Second Declaration of Havana with The First Declaration of Havana. The September 1960 First Declaration of Havana was issued in response to the Declaration of San José, Costa Rica—the U.S. government-engineered condemnation of revolutionary Cuba by the Organization of American States.

The February 1962 Second Declaration of Havana is a call for revolutionary struggle by workers and peasants across the Americas. Each declaration was approved by acclamation at a rally of more than one million in Havana (Pathfinder, 1994).

FROM PATHFINDER

To Speak the Truth Why Washington's 'Cold War' against Cuba Doesn't End

FIDEL CASTRO AND CHE GUEVARA

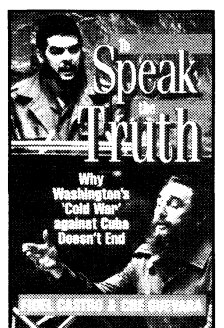
In historic speeches before the United Nations and UN bodies, Guevara and Castro address the workers of the world, explaining why the U.S. government so hates the example set by the socialist revolution in Cuba and why Washington's effort to destroy it will fail. \$16.95

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including those listed on page 12.



Port Chicago deaths in WWII: still no justice

BY ELLEN HAYWOOD

PITTSBURGH, California—President William Clinton granted a formal presidential pardon December 23 to Freddie Meeks, one of 50 Black sailors convicted at the World War II Port Chicago, California, mutiny trial.

The sailors, who worked loading ammunition in all Black units under white officers, were vilified as cowards and mutineers for refusing to return to their jobs after an explosion killed 320 people on July 17, 1944, at the Port Chicago naval depot. Meanwhile, the white officers were given 30 day leaves following the disaster.

"The lesson is we stood up for our rights," Meeks told the *New York Times* after learning of the pardon. "We stood up to get the same rights the whites had."

Over the last year pressure has been building to clear the names of the Black sailors. A television movie starring Danny Glover, a number of articles, a documentary, and books on the case have appeared. Last July 17, a 55th anniversary commemoration held in the Bay Area, sponsored by the Black Hollywood Education and Resource Center, drew together survivors and supporters to press for justice.

Not all the survivors and seamen convicted of mutiny were in favor of a presidential pardon. According to the December 24 *San Francisco Chronicle*, Jack Crittenden, 74, of Montgomery, Alabama, said he was not interested in a pardon. "If a pardon means freedom from punishment, I've already served my time and been punished," he said. He called instead for Congress to pay full death benefits to the families of the 320 men who died at Port Chicago. The \$5,000 benefit the families had been entitled to at the time was reduced by Congress to \$3,000.

The devastating explosion was a result of speedup instituted by the U.S. Navy in the final years of World War II at Port Chicago, which was the main ammunition depot for ships bound for the Pacific war theater.

White officers bet on which crew could load the most ammunition. Joseph Small, who the Navy claimed was the "ringleader" of the mutiny, said in *The Port Chicago Mutiny*, a book by Robert Allen, "There was always a net loaded and ready to go aboard, and always one empty and ready to be lifted out of the hold. The DC [Division Commander] was going to win his fifty or burn up the winches and kill the crew."

Allen's book also quotes junior officers who say they were criticized by higher ups for their "lack of tonnage." Captain Merrill Kinne, the officer in charge of Port Chicago, initiated the practice of posting daily average rates of loading for each division.

The International Longshoremen's and Warehousemen's Union (ILWU) warned the Navy of the inevitability of an explosion under these conditions. They pointed out that no union longshoreman was allowed to handle ammunition without five years experience. The ILWU volunteered to train the Black Navy recruits, an offer the Navy ignored.

On July 17, 1944, crews were pushed to

get the USS *E.A. Bryan* loaded so it could sail and make room for another ship on the dock. The *Bryan* was a Liberty ship, said to be "built by the mile and chopped off by the yard." They were loading "hot cargo," incendiary bombs left for last because they have the fuse intact.

At 10:17 p.m. two explosions disintegrated the ship and the docks, blew the second ship out of the water, and devastated the barracks and the nearby town of Port Chicago. The force of the explosions were felt over the entire Bay Area and registered as a small earthquake on the seismic graphs in San Francisco.

Of the 320 people killed in the explosion, 202 were Black—everyone on the two ships, the pier, and the fire barge. Only 51 bodies were found sufficiently intact to be identified. A total of 390 military personnel and civilians were injured, a number of them blinded by flying glass.

A Naval Court of Inquiry was convened four days later to investigate the explosion. While dismissing the testimony of witnesses about unsafe practices as "inconclusive," the judge advocate in charge of the investigation, Lieut. Commander Keith Ferguson, said, "The colored enlisted personnel are neither temperamentally or intellectually capable of handling high explosives.... There was rough and careless handling of the explosives being loaded aboard the ships at Port Chicago."

The officers were cleared of responsibility for the disaster.

Many of the white officers were given 30-day leaves following the explosion but the Black seamen were ordered to return to work on August 9. Among them, 258 said they would obey any other order but they were afraid to handle ammunition. They were held in a barge, interrogated individually, some forced to sign false statements.

Rear Admiral Carleton Wright told the men, "Mutinous conduct in time of war carries the death sentence, and the hazards of facing a firing squad are far greater than the hazards of handling ammunition."

Still, facing these threats, 50 refused to return to loading ammunition. They were charged with mutiny and the Navy unleashed a hysteria campaign to back up the charges and to blame the Black seamen for the explosion itself.

The seamen conducted themselves in a steady and dignified manner under fire from the prosecution and press and in the face of weak defense counsel.

At the urging of local leaders of the NAACP, Thurgood Marshall, then the organization's main legal counsel who later became a Supreme Court Justice, attended the trial in its fourth week. The next day, October 10, Marshall held a news conference denouncing the prosecution and the Navy for racist discrimination and its disregard for safety.

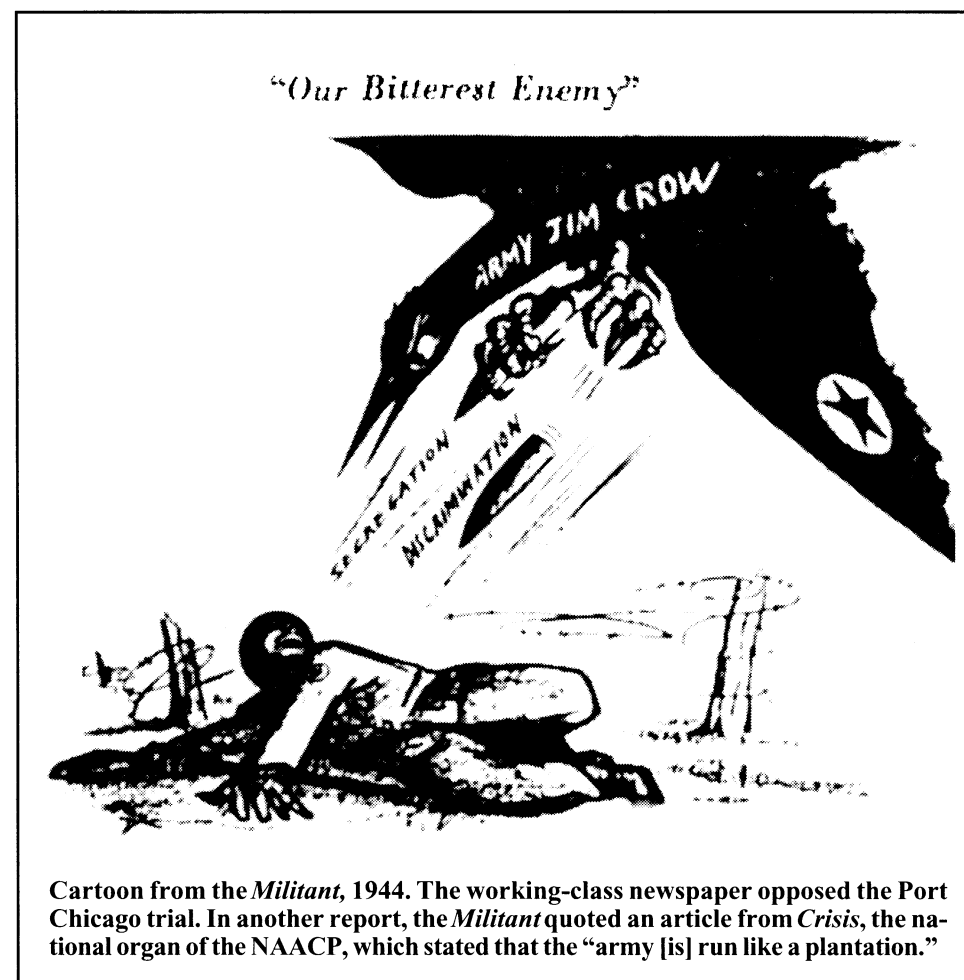
On October 24, after only 80 minutes of deliberation, including time for lunch, the Navy court found all the defendants guilty

of making a mutiny and sentenced them to 15 years hard labor and then a dishonorable discharge.

The NAACP Legal Defense Fund took up the seamen's appeal and launched a public campaign to win support for overturning of their mutiny convictions. The NAACP issued a pamphlet in 1945, entitled, *Mutiny? The Real Story of How the Navy Branded 50 Fear-*

in World War II, one killed and the other suffering "major psychological" wounds. "Turns out all they would have had to do was claim that war was dangerous and refuse to fight. Then, 50 years later, a draft-dodging president would pardon them because it seemed 'politically correct.'"

Several subsequent letters took issue with Mr. Willis's views.



Cartoon from the *Militant*, 1944. The working-class newspaper opposed the Port Chicago trial. In another report, the *Militant* quoted an article from *Crisis*, the national organ of the NAACP, which stated that the "army [is] run like a plantation."

shocked Sailors as Mutineers.

News of the presidential pardon sparked a debate here that was reflected in the letters to the editor in the *San Francisco Chronicle*.

Howard Mass wrote that he "was a deck hand on an Army Transport Service tug, which made frequent trips to Port Chicago to tow gasoline and ammunition barges. Cruising by the blast site a few days later, one could see the devastation: a tangle of wreckage and a dismembered ship's propeller sticking in the mud."

"After the explosion, nobody wanted to go anywhere near Port Chicago. It was a time of rumor and speculation. It took several weeks before people stopped jumping at every loud noise. If the Navy had subsequently demonstrated to everyone that Port Chicago had been made safe, the black sailors would have served. I'm glad a pardon was finally given."

John Willis wrote, "Gee, my uncles were stupid," explaining that both were Marines

Willis responded, "The point was that many men in World War II, especially those out actually fighting the enemy, were also scared and frightened for their lives, but they managed to do their duty and serve their country honorably. To make a 'hero' out of someone who refused a direct order during wartime and displayed cowardly behavior is to dishonor all those veterans who had the courage to fight for our country."

Robert Martin wrote back: "Mr. Willis still doesn't get it. Black soldiers at Port Chicago (and elsewhere) were exposed to treatment reserved for 'lesser beings.' World War II black soldiers were often considered 'disposable,' thus they were subjected to death and danger far beyond what Mr. Willis understands.... He simply does not understand that racism did exist and still exists, needlessly poisoning the lives of people of yesterday and today. Port Chicago was simply one manifestation of that painful, racist reality."

Signs of recovery in north Korea

BY KAREN RAY

SAN FRANCISCO—In recent months north Korea has shown signs of recovering from nearly five years of severe food shortages due to a series of crop failures caused by extreme weather.

In 1999, figures show a halt in the decline in the economy and availability of food. "They'll break even this year," said an unnamed U.S. official quoted in a January 6 *San Francisco Chronicle* article. "It will be zero percent growth, but at least it won't be negative."

The article, titled, "Surprising North Korean Recovery Dashes Hopes for Reunification," has a tone of disappointment that the country did not "implode."

It says that an improving economy, shoring up of north Korea's armed forces, more aid from China, and improved diplomatic relations with several governments means that "the withdrawal of 37,000 U.S. troops from south Korea...has been deferred indefinitely" by Washington.

The nation's annual demand for grain is nearly 8 million tons, about half needed for human consumption.

In 1996, the nation's grain output fell to 2.5 million tons. The hope by U.S. and south Korean officials was the economic disaster

would cause the Democratic Peoples Republic of Korea (DPRK) to collapse, opening the way for a takeover by Washington and the south Korean regime it backs.

Since the first signs of shortages and an international appeal by the DPRK for food aid, Washington has obstructed international aid. The Clinton administration has used food as a weapon, demanding Pyongyang first join talks with Seoul and cease work on nuclear arms and long-range missiles.

The history of the Korean peninsula since 1950 has been shaped by the war carried out by the U.S. government against the Korean people from 1950-53. U.S. forces leveled much of the country through massive bombing, especially in the north. They destroyed cities and most of the industrial infrastructure of the north, and systematically bombed dikes to destroy crops and cause flooding.

In order to impose the division of the country, Washington suppressed popular uprisings in the south. Nearly four years of slaughter left 3.5 million civilians dead. Ever since the armistice in 1953, Washington has maintained 37,000 troops and heavy weaponry in the south, including nuclear weapons.

In addition to economic progress, north Korea has made strides in normalizing diplomatic relations with a number of countries. At the beginning of the year Italy announced it was opening relations with north Korea, the first Group of Seven industrial nations to do so.

Other European nations with which it has formal relations are Sweden, Finland, Denmark, Austria, and Portugal. Japan lifted sanctions and opened negotiations intended to establish diplomatic relations last December.

On the eve of talks between the governments of north Korea and the United States, scheduled for Berlin on January 22, Washington conducted an antimissile test in the Pacific amid charges that north Korea is a "rogue state."

In response, the north Korean government declared it is reconsidering its moratorium on missile testing.

The Korean Central News Agency quoted a north Korean foreign ministry spokesman who said, "What matters is the U.S. assertion that such a (testing) drive is intended to cope with a nonexistent 'missile threat' from the DPRK and other countries."

North Korea agreed to a moratorium on missile testing in September.

Further reading

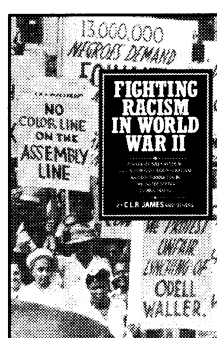
Fighting Racism in World War II

C.L.R. James, George Breitman, Edgar Keemer, and others

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United States from 1939 to 1945, taken from the pages of the socialist newsweekly, the *Militant*.

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Cops attack dockworkers in S. Carolina

Continued from front page
were blue lights everywhere. I saw four big buses headed down there. They had the whole circumference covered. They were on the roofs, horseback, there was a helicopter and they had the National Guard on alert," stated Kenneth Riley, president of ILA Local 1422.

The cops mobilized to ensure the unloading of a Nordana Line ship by non-union dockworkers. Nordana is a small Danish shipping company that since December has been provoking the ILA by using Winyah Stevedoring, a nonunion outfit, to unload. ILA members unloaded these ships for 22 years prior to that. In response, the ILA has conducted informational pickets at the terminals to protest.

Union dockworkers are paid about \$24 per hour plus benefits to load and unload ships. Nonunion longshoremen get about \$10 per hour with no benefits.

Police mobilization

There were two union pickets present when the cops assembled the evening of January 20. Officers from the State Law Enforcement Division, the state Highway Patrol, the Charleston County Sheriff's Office, and three cities' police departments made up the force. Buses filled with cops clad in riot helmets and carrying clear plastic shields and long wooden clubs, followed by armored vehicles, arrived on the scene.

At 6:00 p.m. longshoremen held a closed-door meeting. The local press claimed 1,000 workers met at the union hall. Riley disputed this, saying, "There's only 800 members in Local 1422, and a few hundred of them were probably working then. They raised the numbers intentionally to justify 600 cops."

Charleston Police Chief Rueben Greenberg insisted, "We needed to have every one of them there."

At midnight, hundreds of longshoremen returned to the union hall. Carrying picket signs, they began to march towards the terminal chanting, "ILA, ILA, ILA." A fight ensued



Militant/Greg McCartan

Longshoremen joined January 17 rally demanding battle flag of Confederate army be taken off South Carolina capitol.

when the marchers confronted the wall of 600 police. A temporary floodlight the cops had erected was knocked over and the scene was plunged into darkness. A police helicopter then circled the crowd with a spotlight.

What followed was a police riot against the longshoremen. Two state Highway Patrol cruisers headed straight for the rear of the workers. One of them slammed into at least one of the protesters, opening a path for the other car, which was pelted by debris.

Throughout the melee, cops employed shock grenades, smoke bombs, dogs, and tear gas. The press reports that police fired guns containing "bean-bag-like" projectiles at the crowd to move them back. At one point, when the union president tried to mediate, police hit him in the head with a baton. At least 10 people were treated at area hospitals or by paramedics for cuts, bumps, and bruises.

Charleston cops were on hand making videotapes of the clash. Since differentiation between the police photographers and local media was difficult in the heat of the battle, at least two cameramen, after being warned to shut their equipment off by workers, were roughed up. A television van was also overturned.

"The police did a marvelous job," declared Charleston mayor Joseph Riley, Jr. "If we hadn't had that many personnel there, things

really would have gotten out of hand. All things considered, things were held under control."

Gov't charges of 'riot'

Eight dockworkers were arrested on the scene, initially accused of trespassing. They were released the morning of January 22. Later that day the State Attorney General, Charles Condon, upgraded the charges to instigating a riot, which is a felony punishable by up to five years in prison. They were sent back to jail that day.

In an unusual nighttime court session, the workers were ordered held on bail ranging from \$35,000 to \$100,000. The judge also stipulated that if released on bail, the defendants would be on home detention from 7:00 p.m. to 6:00 a.m. each day. They can go to work and to union meetings but can't participate in any picketing or protests, they were told. The ILA paid the bond to have them released the next day.

Condon said his plan to deal with "union dockworker violence and attacks upon police officers" is "jail, jail, and more jail." In a press release from his office, he said there should be either no bail or the maximum allowed, no plea bargaining, and no leniency for unionists "who attacked or are planning to attack police officers enforcing the law at the harbor in Charleston," according to a press release from the attorney general's office.

South Carolina authorities describe the protests against the use of nonunion longshoremen to load and unload ships as a challenge the state's antiunion "right-to-work" laws and mentality. Condon announced the state of South Carolina is seeking a temporary injunction for public nuisance and "violation of the states' right to work laws against the International Longshoremen's Association and Kenneth Riley." The order would prohibit more than four individuals at any time from peacefully picketing any entrance to the Columbus Street terminal. "A citizen's right not to join a union is absolute and will be fully protected," Condon stated.

The *Charleston Post and Courier* described the scene as "the worst labor disturbance the waterfront has seen in decades."

The editors joined in the attack on the

union January 21, with an editorial arguing, "Those involved must know that with or without their approval, South Carolina remains a right-to-work state. Nonunion workers, by law, can load and unload non-union ships at this port."

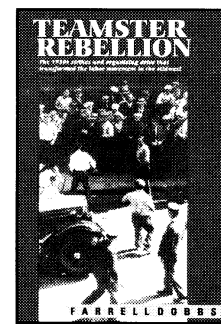
On January 17, the dockworkers sent three buses and several carloads of workers to participate in the Martin Luther King Day rally in Columbia. "The local was in agreement the flag should come down," Riley said. "We called a meeting of the members and they voted unanimously to send the buses. We did it because the flag issue was creating divisions."

ILA member Robert Vanderhurst said he took his three sons to the protest. "I felt this was a good opportunity for them to see a large group of people who believe in something come together for positive change," he said.

The big majority of members of ILA Local 1422 are Black. The eight facing charges include both Black and white workers. At the hearings January 21 there was standing room only.

"The show of local support from other unions has been good," Riley said. "Everyone has been calling in and waiting for us to tell them how they can help." Messages of support can be sent to ILA Local 1422, 910 Morrison Dr., Charleston, SC 29403. Phone: (843) 720-7362. Fax: (843) 723-5643.

Paul Cornish contributed to this article.



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Changes that strengthen the working class

The excerpt below is taken from "Capitalism's Deadly World Disorder," a talk given April 10, 1993, at a regional socialist educational conference held in Greensboro, North Carolina, and the following day to a similar gathering in Des Moines, Iowa. The talk reported the decisions of a meeting the previous weekend in New York City of the Socialist Workers Party National Committee, youth leaders of the SWP, and leaders of communist leagues in several other countries. The entire talk appears in *Capitalism's World Disorder: Working-Class Politics at the Millennium*. Copyright © 1999 by Pathfinder Press, reprinted by permission.

BY JACK BARNES

Enormous changes are taking place that are improving the odds that the international working class can become a social force able to transform and salvage the future. The working class makes up a larger and weightier component of the population in countries the world over than ever before in history, and it continues to expand. In a growing number of countries, moreover, the working class is more in-

from the pages of Capitalism's World Disorder

ternational in its makeup than ever before too. And these trends will continue and deepen as the crises of world capitalism unfold in coming years.

Communists often explain that there is no "Europe"; there are only a number of capitalist states and their rival national ruling classes. That is true, but I have learned that leaving it at that is not the best way to help people understand the political point we are making. It is more accurate to say that *their* Europe is *disappearing* — the capitalists' Europe. Their idea of a Europe of a single currency, of a single fiscal and monetary policy, of converging or at least compatible foreign military policies — all of this still widely talked about in ruling circles in Europe — is a bourgeois utopia.¹

Our Europe is slowly coming into being, however. Think about the expansion of intra-European travel. What comes along with expanded flows of capital and commodities worldwide is greater migration by workers to get jobs. In every single capitalist country in Europe today there is a higher percentage than ever before of workers from other countries and other nationalities who are part of the working class. The working class in every imperialist country — and this will even begin to include Japan — is more multinational than at any time in its modern history.

On a leadership level, the importance of the political fights under way in Cuba and in South Africa deserves our attention. Since you spent yesterday evening's session discussing Mary-Alice Waters's report on the Cuban revolution today, and will spend tomorrow morning discussing Sam Manuel's talk on South Africa, I will not say much about them tonight. But the increasing interest in genuine communist literature in these countries, and the degree of interest in discussions with revolutionary-minded workers and youth from other countries, indicates the possibilities of a way forward.

Not since the early days of the 1960s has there been the kind of political openness in

Cuba that is developing there today. I am not talking about the new layer of hotel managers with gold chains and Rolex watches; I am not talking, of course, about those in Cuba who aspire to be like the pimps of the capitalist world. They may number in the hundreds of thousands. What I am talking about—and what I know was at the center of your discussions last night during the conference session on Cuba Today—are the millions of workers in Cuba, and their tested political leadership within the Communist Party, who are determined not to allow what they fought for, what they believe in, and what they have accomplished to be destroyed. They are determined to defend the socialist revolution. The working class and its communist vanguard are who ultimately count in Cuba, and they will have the final say in a real battle.

To understand the potential power of our class, we also must take account of the growing numbers of women workers the world over. Never in history has there been anything comparable to the position and political weight of women in the workforce and labor movement today. The place of the fight for women's rights as part of the political battle to transform the workers movement compares to nothing experienced by previous generations of revolutionists.

Another powerful advance for our class is registered by the fact that over the last several decades, for the first time in history, world-class communist leaders—looked to by thinking workers everywhere—have emerged from the most economically backward countries and parts of the world. Communists like Maurice Bishop in Grenada and Thomas Sankara in Burkina Faso were genuine products of the class struggle in their own countries and became leaders of world stature.

And someday a small book will be written about the place of Nelson Mandela in the history of the class struggle in the imperialist epoch. Mandela has not only educated us all to better comprehend the dynamics of the class struggle in South Africa, but also helped transform the capacity of workers everywhere to recognize world-class revolutionary leadership when we see it in action.

Here is a man who, during his visit to South Africa's Natal province in March of this year, stood up before a big audience, mostly of Indian origin, and frankly explained the weaknesses and mistakes of the African National Congress in relation to that community. Those mistakes, he said, are reflected even in the ANC's very popular anthem, which, he said, is "purely based on the history and the aspirations of the African people" and contains "no reference to the culture, the history, the contribution of the Indian and the Coloured communities."²

Workers the world over can learn a lot about class solidarity, too, from reading the speeches of Nelson Mandela. Time and again, he hammers away at the importance of the battle against the grinding social conditions and divisive racist oppression facing the working class in South Africa — the battle for employment; the battle against violence, against the coarsening of how society values life itself; the battle against racism, race-baiting, and scapegoating of any kind.

The greatest obstacle in the working-class movement that has faced all workers and all



Militant/Carole Lesnick
Participant at November rally to support strikers at Basic Vegetable Co. in King City, California.

revolutionists — the worldwide Stalinist murder machine that caused the bloody defeat of so many revolutions — is weaker than at any time since its consolidation in the first half of the 1930s. The combination of fear and horror, of corruption and confusion that Stalinism brought into our class; the substitution of the needs of a small, privileged national caste for the international needs of working people — all this has taken historic blows.

Crises like those of the Stalinist apparatuses in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe are still ahead of us in China. They will take different forms there, because the huge pools of labor in the countryside create different openings for economic development that no longer exist anywhere in Eastern Europe or the former USSR. But pushing rural toilers from the land and rapid, brutal indus-

trialization will produce big class struggles in China, in different combinations and at a different pace, just as they did in Europe and America over the past one hundred and fifty years. That is all coming further down the road. The world bourgeoisie's dreams of the great miracle — a billion Chinese consumers and value-producers — will bring such struggles! And communist leadership in China will come in exactly the same way it will come everywhere else, from fighters in the working class and among revolutionary-minded youth.

We take it for granted now that young communists from the United States, or Sweden, or New Zealand go to the Philippines, or go to a conference of Asian youth in India, and mix it up with other young fighters from the region and sell communist literature. But for decades this was almost unthinkable. Such exchanges were largely blocked off by the virulence of Stalinism in Asia, which marched under the banner of Maoism and produced the horrors of Pol Potism, among other things.³ In the so-called Western world, there was a lot of petty-bourgeois romanticizing of this Maoist variant of Stalinism, as if a worker in Asia could not be an equal, could not be expected to rise to the same level of political consciousness as a worker elsewhere in the world.

But there is not a single political organization or current anywhere in the world today that looks politically to the Beijing regime or draws tribute from its trough. And only a handful of organizations in Asia or elsewhere, splintered among themselves, still cling to one or another variant of Maoism. Given the disintegration of these Stalinist obstacles, new energies, capacities, and creativity among millions of workers and youth can be opened throughout Asia and beyond.

The primordial fact that communists have insisted on over the past few years is being confirmed: It is *not* new wellsprings of capitalist expansion and power that are being created as the twenty-first century draws near. To the contrary, the size of the hereditary proletariat worldwide is growing, as are new possibilities for workers to cross borders and work together to find ways to move forward. And as this process unfolds, young people and workers looking for dignity — who are inspired by militant resistance and a growing desire to give as well as to receive solidarity, and who aspire to true political equality — will find their place in the ranks and leadership of the communist movement.

—25 AND 50 YEARS AGO—

25 CENTS
THE MILITANT
A SOCIALIST NEWSWEEKLY/PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF THE WORKING PEOPLE

February 7, 1975

Charles Crowley, a key prosecution witness against five Attica defendants, has admitted that he had given false testimony against them because he was terrorized by police and prison guards.

Crowley, a Black former prisoner, said he testified to "save my life." He told a Jan. 22 pretrial hearing that after the Attica rebellion he was sodomized by guards with a nightstick, threatened repeatedly with knives and a gun, shown the body of a Black prisoner killed in the Attica massacre, and "made to crawl around on the floor and shout 'white power' and kiss their feet."

As a result of the torture, Crowley said he agreed to "back up" stories fed to him by state officials implicating four of the five men now on trial in connection with the deaths of two other prisoners.

Crowley's admission further exposes the Attica indictments for what they are—a massive frame-up to prosecute the victims of Attica rather than the real criminals.

Sixty-two people have been indicted on 1,400 different felony counts since the Attica rebellion. All of them were prisoners at Attica at the time of the uprising. Not one state trooper or prison official who was responsible for the massacre at the prison has been indicted. And the biggest criminal of them all—Rockefeller—has been promoted from governor of New York to vice-president of the United States.

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February 6, 1950

President Truman followed up his brazen declaration that the decision on making the H[ell]-Bomb was "his and his alone" by issuing on Jan. 31 the fateful order to go full speed ahead with the mass production of the Hell-Bomb.

What does the decision relating to the Hell-Bomb actually involve? It involves directly the lives of millions of people, if not all of them. It is the millions of civilians in all cities, big and small, in this country and throughout the world, who are the real targets of the Hell-Bomb whose major effectiveness, like that of the A-Bomb, lies in destroying not military objectives or forces but primarily civilians, cities, and industrial installations.

And the Hell-Bomb is merely the second installment in the frantic atomic armaments race. There will follow inescapably the third, fourth, and other installments, each spelling out more infernal destruction than the one before.

The Hell Bomb itself, with its unlimited blast potential, spells out the total annihilation of any and all cities, any and all inhabitants. How is it that such a life-and-death decision is made by a single individual?

The American people have now been told not only to accept a course that may lead to universal suicide, destroying civilization and perhaps the planet itself: the Hell-Bomb decision involves directly all their democratic liberties as well.

1. On January 1, 1999, eleven governments in Europe did begin using a common currency—the "euro"—to denominate stock, bond, and banking transactions. Actual "euro" notes are to replace German marks, French francs, and other national currencies in circulation in 2002. Compared to its eleven separate predecessors, the euro will put up stiffer competition to a relatively weakened U.S. dollar as a store of value in national treasuries around the world, and later perhaps even as a unit of account.

From birth, however, the euro's stability was undermined by the conflicting interests of the rival imperialist bourgeoisies it pretends to yoke together. As the onerous effects of capitalist overproduction bear down in differential ways on countries and regions across Europe — and working people press demands for jobs, against farm foreclosures, and for livable wages and government-funded social benefits — the fissures in the new currency union will widen.

2. See "Speech to Members of the Indian Community," in *Nelson Mandela Speaks* (New York: Pathfinder, 1993), pp. 222-25.

3. Pol Pot was the top leader of the former Khmer Rouge regime that inflicted a murderous reign of terror on the peasants and working people of Cambodia for nearly four years following the collapse of the U.S.-backed rightist government there in April 1975. The Khmer Rouge, which combined the Maoist variant of Stalinism with xenophobic Cambodian nationalism, was driven from power by the combined forces of the Vietnamese armed forces and Cambodian oppositionists in January 1979.

In June 1997, after years of virtually complete clandestinity, Pol Pot was put on public trial in the military redoubt of a faction of the Khmer Rouge and sentenced to "life imprisonment" for ordering the execution of a top aide. The Stalinist-trained butcher died under house arrest in April 1998. In December 1998, the last remaining Khmer Rouge forces surrendered to the Cambodian government. A few weeks later, two remaining senior Khmer Rouge officials, Khieu Samphan and Nuon Chea, also turned themselves in, appealing at a press conference in Phnom Penh to "let bygones be bygones."

Drop charges against dockers!

The entire labor movement, fighters against racism, and other working people should come to the defense of the longshoremen in Charleston, South Carolina, who are facing frame-up charges of “inciting to riot.” The real crime of these members of the International Longshoremen’s Association (ILA) was to stand up to union busting by the shipping bosses, who received backing from the government and its police agencies.

State officials and the media are raising a hue and cry that the union’s actions opposing use of nonunion workers at the docks is a violation of the state’s “right-to-work” laws. This anti-labor legislation—opposed by the labor movement and defeated in other states—is designed to protect the “right” of the bosses to set wages and working conditions, free from unions. Workers are offered the “right” to lower pay, few or no benefits, and no union control on the job over questions of safety and work rules.

But the Charleston dockworkers took a stand and refused to allow the bosses to run ragged over them. For the employers that’s a dangerous example. It can encourage others to draw the conclusion that in the labor movement we can take what we’re big enough to take, regardless of the laws on the books.

The hundreds of workers who marched to the Charleston docks just after midnight January 20 are part of the beginnings of a proletarian movement in the South and

throughout the United States. Many of them had just participated in the magnificent show of solidarity in Columbia, South Carolina, demanding the battle flag of the Confederate army—installed above the Capitol in a racist response to the Black civil rights movement—come down.

The participation by ILA members after a vote at their union meeting, like many other workers from Charleston and throughout the region, in the action in Columbia is an example to be emulated.

Taking on broader social questions strengthens the union movement. It turns these basic defensive organizations of the working class toward those fighting the racism, sexist discrimination, police brutality, environmental destruction, and other social evils bred by the capitalist system. It helps workers see other allies, from farmers struggling to keep their land to workers in other countries, like the 170,000 striking dockworkers in India. This broader scope of vision is necessary to transform the unions into tools that workers can use to advance the interests of all those who toil for a living.

We urge our readers to build on the accomplishments of the Martin Luther King Day rally in Columbia and the dockworkers’ mobilization in Charleston by joining the fight to push back the rulers’ frame-up attack on the ILA members in South Carolina with the demand, “Drop the charges now!”

A taste of toilers’ power

As a student who took part in the January 21 occupation of government buildings in Guayaquil put it, working people in Ecuador brought a popular revolutionary government into being. True, it lasted just a few hours, as the military stepped in to salvage the day for the local capitalists and landlords, and their imperialist backers in Washington. But the events demonstrate how the government and employer attacks on working people, and the social devastation caused by the lawful workings of capitalism, breed unexpected social explosions that can have an unambiguous logic towards conquest of power by the toiling masses. No wonder Peter Romero, the former U.S. ambassador to Ecuador and current State Department official, declared that Washington would impose economic sanctions “like on Cuba” if any popular assembly did not turn back power to the former rulers.

It also points to the need to accelerate the work of building proletarian parties capable of leading workers and peasants to take and hold state power. This can open the road to socialist revolution, when joyful moments like those of the proclamation of the popular assembly in Guayaquil arrive.

Like most of the semicolonial world, Ecuador’s working people are squeezed by a ballooning foreign debt on top of exploitation by local rulers. Moreover, what is happening to toilers in Ecuador—where only a third of the work force is regularly employed, rampant inflation is devouring paychecks, and blanket discrimination against the indigenous people is becoming an intolerable affront to human dignity—is not exceptional. It is just one variant of the future facing every country held in economic bondage to world finance capital.

During the last U.S. presidential election, Albert Gore bragged that the massive loans the White House arranged

to shore up the Mexican economy after the collapse of the peso the previous year were a big success for Wall Street and Washington: not only were the loans and the interest paid off, but the U.S. rulers made an additional handsome profit of \$500 million in the process. To do that, the ruling class in Mexico imposed harsh austerity, slashing the living standards of most working people 40 to 50 percent. “There should have been a revolution, but there was barely a demonstration!” *New York Times* liberal columnist Thomas Friedman boasted.

As the current cyclical economic expansion in the United States has entered its ninth year, many capitalist politicians and pundits seem to have similar illusions about much of the semicolonial world—and the United States as well. But as the events in Ecuador reveal, the grinding conditions facing working people will foster not only demonstrations but revolutionary action.

That is the common thread between the explosion of popular anger in Ecuador and the almost simultaneous outpouring of tens of thousands of workers and farmers in Columbia, South Carolina, last week. The capitalist system, in its latest and final stage of imperialism, has wrought not only devastation, but has brought into being a large and potentially powerful working class, and its proletarian allies on the land, with enormous capacities and willingness to fight.

As the events in Ecuador and South Carolina show, the future capitalism has in store for working people is not inevitable. It can be changed by the timely solidarity, courageous action, and united struggle of workers and farmers conscious of their power to transform the world. Thousands of fighters are open to that perspective and to the need for a revolutionary program and organization that can make that possibility a reality.

Join in socialist campaigns

The *Militant* welcomes the decision to continue the campaign to sell *Capitalism’s World Disorder: Working-Class Politics at the Millennium* and encourages all our readers to join in the effort. In addition to objectively strengthening the working-class movement, it will, as Norton Sandler points out, help prepare for an international *Militant* subscription drive two months from now.

The drive will run from March 25 to May 21 and will focus on winning new subscribers to these publications among the growing numbers who are engaging in political discussion and action in response to the capitalist offensive and the injustice, brutality, and reactionary movements and ideas that it spawns.

Capitalism’s World Disorder, and the campaign to sell it, are powerful tools in winning fighters and young people to see the depth of the capitalist crisis, discuss the need for revolutionary action by working people, and join the Young Socialists, the Socialist Workers Party, and the Communist Leagues in other countries. The need for a revolutionary leadership becomes more sharply posed as the pace of the class struggle picks up.

Participants in the campaign will very soon have a new

weapon. *El desorden mundial del capitalismo*, the Spanish-language edition of the book, has a huge potential audience among the millions of working people in this country, Latin America, and around the world whose first language is Spanish. Socialist campaigners have already met co-workers and others who are waiting expectantly for the new book.

From reading the speeches in the *Militant* by Ernesto Che Guevara to be published in *Che Talks to Young People* in both Spanish and English, it is clear these new titles will be a substantial political addition to the campaign, broaden the reach of Pathfinder, and get a communist perspective and course of action into the hands of thousands.

The Havana Book Fair next month will provide a major boost to the distribution of these titles. *Militant* readers can participate in this effort by contributing generously to the Books for Cuba fund, which makes it possible for thousands of workers, farmers, and youth in Cuba to see, read, and purchase Pathfinder titles.

We look forward to notes, articles, and other information on the *Capitalism’s World Disorder* campaign from readers in the weeks ahead.

Should workers oppose the death penalty in Cuba?

Should capital punishment be used as a method of dealing with “crime and corruption in a worker-controlled regime?” asks *Militant* reader Adam Levenstein. He referred to last week’s column on “Gun control in Cuba,” which discussed how gun control or capital punishment cannot be abstracted from the realities of class society.

Levenstein mentions how the bureaucratic regimes heading the workers states in Eastern Europe, the former Soviet Union, and China used executions to “preserve the Stalinist caste.” Thus, capital punishment, he concludes, is a question of “morality” and “socialist states such as Cuba” should practice “moral condescension” towards the death penalty.

DISCUSSION WITH OUR READERS

Under capitalism, capital punishment, prisons, and other instruments of repression exist for one reason—to attempt to terrorize people into accepting an inhumane, irrational system based on maintaining the privileges of the capitalist class over the toiling majority. The number of executions has been rising almost every year in the United States, and the vast majority of prisoners awaiting state-sanctioned murder are from working-class families.

The Cuban socialist revolution exists in a world where capitalist market relations dominate. The Cuban people face constant threats from the most powerful and well armed empire the world has ever known, located just 90 miles away. They are fighting for socialism—a world system unachievable in one country, never mind a country that faces what Cuba does every day.

But workers, farmers, and young people in Cuba have an array of weapons at their disposal in order to defend their conquests and aid those fighting exploitation and oppression around the world.

First and foremost is their political and moral stands; the example they set for the exploited and oppressed internationally. Second, they have built a state apparatus, including an armed forces, Territorial Troop Militias, and the Production and Defense Brigades that stand ready to confront any threat of Yankee military aggression. The defeat of Washington’s forces in the Bay of Pigs debacle was an example to the imperialists of this fact. Cuba also has the right to use the death penalty as part of these weapons.

The death penalty in Cuba has been used very sparingly over the past two decades. As reviewed in last week’s column and described elsewhere in this issue, the leadership of the revolution charts a course to defend the interests of the workers and farmers there. It is a leadership that refuses to subordinate the interests of the Cuban people to Washington’s dictates, and seeks to advance an uncompromising struggle against imperialist domination anywhere in the world. It is this stance and the steps the revolution has taken toward building a socialist society in Cuba that incur the unremitting enmity of the U.S. government.

The revolutionary leadership in Cuba makes it possible to confront and combat bureaucratic deformations, including corruption, that are manifestations of capitalist society from which Cuba is not immune. An aspect of this was involved in the case of Arnaldo Ochoa, a division general, and three other high-ranking officers, who were arrested, tried, convicted, and executed in 1989 for drug trafficking and abuse of office.

Cuban leaders explained that a key principle of the revolution was at stake. Ochoa had been a commander in Angola while participating in an international mission to defend that country’s independence against military assaults by the racist regime in South Africa. He had correctly signed three execution orders for young Cuban soldiers who raped and murdered Angolan women, leaders of Cuba’s Revolutionary Armed Forces explained.

Ochoa’s abuses took place during one of Cuba’s greatest internationalist efforts, which dealt a major blow to apartheid. If he had been treated more leniently than those young soldiers, it “could damage the trust of our people in the leadership of the party and the leadership of the Revolutionary Armed Forces,” said Cuban president Fidel Castro in a 1989 speech to the Council of State. The lives of those who wear stars or medals, or have wealth or political connections, are not worth more than anyone else in Cuba, the Cuban leaders argued.

Far from being a setback for working people, the way the Cuban leadership responded to this threat and carried out its responsibilities to defend the revolution has strengthened the ability of workers and farmers in Cuba to resist imperialism.

The extension of the socialist revolution and the bringing down of the imperialist powers will open up the possibilities for working people to eradicate every barbaric remnant of class society, which will include the elimination of the death penalty.

—MAURICE WILLIAMS

Nonunion workers strike in Houston

BY DEAN COOK
AND JANET ANDERSON

HOUSTON—Workers at Quietflex Manufacturing Co. won a victory January 21 when bosses offered their jobs back. Some 82 workers had walked off the job January 10.

Benito Dominguez, one of the protest leaders, said, "We won an important victory, which is the first step in the struggle. Now we have to go back in to win and defend those rights—not just for ourselves but for all the workers in the plant."

These workers, all Latino, made up one of the production departments and the shipping department. They say they were fed up with low pay, bad working conditions, and lack of respect. They have no union.

"Everybody here is paid by piecework," said Filadelfo Santillan. "We have to produce faster to get any more money. If you don't work fast enough they will fire you." He said they don't get paid if a breakdown stops production.

Quietflex Manufacturing, an air conditioning duct maker, is owned by Goodman Holding, which also owns Amana Home Appliances. It is the nation's largest manufacturer of air conditioning, heating, and home appliances.

"We work with fiberglass," Santillan said. "It goes everywhere. They never clean it up." A cleanup crew had been brought in since the walkout began "because they are afraid that OSHA [Occupational Safety and Health Administration] or someone will see how bad they are."

According to Santillan, workers had asked for a raise. The boss refused to listen to them. The day of the walkout, "we got together in front of the plant. The company told us to go back inside." When they did not, they were told that they were all fired. "Then they called the police and they made us get off the property," he said.

The workers decided to set up a picket line, which they have maintained every workday since. "We tried to go back to work Tuesday," the striker said, but the company refused to let them.

About 60 workers from other departments remained in the plant along with replacement workers. Strikers reported the number of trucks leaving the plant had dropped dramatically.

Several workers said the departments are divided along racial lines, with Latinos getting the harder, dirtier, and worst paying jobs. Crescencio Martinez, who has worked in the plant for five years, said, "When people want to transfer to another department they say, 'Do you know English? Well, then they stay in the same place!'"

Doug McGee, an organizer for the Sheet Metal Workers union, was out walking the picket line, but said that his union does not represent the workers.

"I am here in solidarity. We are trying to help out." He said his union has their lawyers working on the case.



Militant/Janet Anderson

Workers on picket line against Quietflex Manufacturing Co. The nonunion strikers advanced the fight for dignity and a union in a plant owned by the largest manufacturer of heating, air conditioning, and home appliances in the country.

Stockholm train drivers protest concessions

BY CATHARINA TIRSÉN

STOCKHOLM—"Nobody likes this contract," said a train driver (engineer) on his way to work at Central Station here. "The pay is not so bad but all other aspects are. The number of holidays will go down from 34 to 25 and retirement age will go up from 60 to 65."

Anders Nyman, another driver, said the new shift schedules were the worse part of the contract. "We have to leave work after 1:00 a.m. and come to work before 3:00 a.m. where there is no public transport," he said.

On January 6 the private company

Citypendeln took over the commuter trains in the Stockholm area from the state-owned railway company, forcing a number of concessions on workers and their union.

Before the takeover workers had access to parking and rooms for rest, as well as an hour paid break on the mornings they were scheduled to work early. "The new schedules means you get up very early and work later through the day, and with no rest. That might become a serious safety problem," Anders said.

The 630 train drivers, conductors, and other workers affected have taken action

against the demands by the company. At the end of October many called in sick for two days, reducing train traffic to less than 50 percent of normal. Union officials nevertheless signed a contract December 22, which included many of the takebacks sought by the bosses.

Leading up to the privatization 140 workers refused to sign on for the new company. That came on top of 50 train drivers who found new jobs in the months before the takeover.

Because of lack of workers, trains have been running every 30 minutes as opposed to every 15 minutes as usual. On January 13 the CEO of Citypendeln, Petter Hyden, was forced to resign. The new CEO immediately sat down to negotiate with the union officials to try to find an agreement that might be more acceptable to the workers.

On January 19 drivers on a recently privatized metro line in Stockholm decided at an unofficial meeting to refuse to work overtime every second week. They are protesting new work schedules that include unpaid breaks several hours long in the middle of the shifts. Sixteen thousand bus drivers struck in February last year around similar demands.

The problem in public transport is a daily discussion at work places around Stockholm. "They should have listened to the workers more, then we would not have had these problems. Who would accept takebacks like that?" said one worker at an electronics factory.

Société Radio-Canada strikers win solidarity

BY ALEXANDRE GEOFFROY

MONTREAL—"We're winning more and more support for our strike because we're fighting against something that a lot of workers are threatened with: job insecurity through contracting out and temporary posts," said Jocelyn Caron, a technician on strike against Société Radio-Canada (SRC). The 1,300 members of the Union of Technicians and Artisans of the French Network (STARF) have been on strike against SRC since December 30.

SRC, a government-owned radio and television network, wants to sell off parts of the enterprise so that the work is done by non union workers without rights. Already more

than 25 percent of the workforce is temporary workers who do not have a guaranteed number of hours or seniority rights.

The strikers have been winning solidarity. Some 100 members of the Association of Television Directors joined the picket line and January 11. The next day 200 members of the Communications Union of Radio Canada (SCRC-CSN) that organizes journalists, anchor people, and researchers, turned out to show their support. The Union of Professional and Office Employees at SRC also gave their support.

Paul Lafleur, a technician, explained, "The different skilled trades prepared for this struggle by drawing the lessons of the

setbacks in the 1995 negotiations when we were had." Then, Radio Canada had demanded that the skilled trades be represented by one union. At the time union members were not in favor of the fusion.

During those negotiations, SRC used the differences in wages and working conditions to divide the members. Having learned from their experience, Lafleur said Radio Canada "confronts a monster that it created. All workers are united in the same organization against the bosses who wanted to pull something over on us: contracting out."

Alexandre Geoffroy is a member of the Young Socialists and works in a meatpacking plant.

LETTERS

A farm open to the world

Alice Ginter died on December 31. She was 88 years old. Alice was a fighter for social justice most of her life including the right of working family farmers to continue to farm the land and not be driven off by the economic conditions that are no fault of their own.

Alice and her son Larry opened up their farmhouse as host to fighters from around the world. Their farm is part way between Des Moines and Marshalltown, Iowa.

Just in the last 15 years as capitalism deepened its crisis, fighters stopped by their farm to offer solidarity and receive it at the same time. The list includes a dairy farmer from New Zealand; Black students, members of the African National Congress from South Africa; a leader of the Landless Rural Peasants of Brazil; and most recently, two leaders of the Union of Young Communists from Cuba.

Alice and Larry also had numerous meetings and rallies at their farm on questions that are part of the U.S. class struggle, such as the fight for immigrant rights, support

for Black farmers in their fight against the racist policies of the government, and opposition to the unsafe environmental conditions generated by the big business hog "factories."

The best way to commemorate the life of this fighter is to join in the struggles that advance the interests of workers and farmers around the world.

*Joe Swanson
Des Moines, Iowa*

China spy case

I was glad to see the article on the railroading of Wen Ho Lee in the January 17 issue of the *Militant*. This case deserves further coverage in the *Militant*. It is something that working people need to be thinking and talking about. At the center of the case is the political preparation of the working class here for more wars in Asia, with China being the central target. For the U.S. government, anti-Chinese racism is a necessary part of this.

Lee was under investigation by the FBI for three years before he

was fired from his job on March 8, 1999. No criminal charges were brought against him until December of last year. On March 7, the FBI hauled Lee in for an interrogation.

The edited version of this questioning was released to the press recently by Lee's lawyers. Small portions were reprinted in the San Jose *Mercury News* on January 8. In an effort to rattle Lee, the FBI agents lied to him, telling him that he had failed a Department of Energy-administered polygraph test which he had actually passed.

"I don't know why I fail. But I do know I have not done anything," Lee said. The FBI agents pressed on.

At one point they threatened him, "Do you know who the Rosenbergs are? The Rosenbergs are the only people that never cooperated with the Federal government in an espionage case."

You know what happened to them? They electrocuted them, Wen Ho." Lee replied, "Yeah, I heard."

Lee had to ask repeatedly for the interview to end. Mr. Lee has had a

lot of people come to his defense, prominent among them are many scientists, professionals, Asian American activists, and a few politicians. A defense fund was established. That he was arrested publicly at his home and is being held without bail and in solitary confinement is testimony to the stakes involved in his railroading.

*Raul Gonzalez
Redwood City, California*

Cuba and death penalty

Last week Maurice Williams wrote an excellent piece on the issues of "gun control" and the death penalty in regards to the progress of the Cuban Revolution.

With regards to the death penalty, however, the article was a little vague. It is undoubtable that capital punishment is an instrument of class rule, but should this extreme method of dealing with crime and corruption be used in a worker-controlled regime?

A problem arises when looking at the Stalinist states of Eastern Europe, the Soviet Union, and

China (among others). These states also have had capital punishment; they used it for the most part to preserve the Stalinist caste. Do we then oppose capital punishment in the Stalinist workers' states, even though they aren't under capitalist rule? Or do we support it, as a weapon against capitalism?

My point is, capital punishment falls into the rather vague category of "morality." I personally think socialist states should have a moral condescension of sorts to the practice; after all, socialist states such as Cuba exist by majority consent and participation, not by terror.

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The letters column is an open forum for all viewpoints on subjects of general interest to our readers. Please keep your letters brief. Where necessary they will be abridged. Please indicate if you prefer that your initials be used rather than your full name.

Iron ore mine workers in Australia step up fight against union busting

BY LINDA HARRIS

SYDNEY, Australia—The battle between iron-ore miners and the industrial giant BHP widened this week as workers went on strike, cops attacked a picket line, and the unions won new solidarity in their struggle against the company's union-busting drive.

Unionists at two mines in the Pilbara region of Western Australia walked off the job for four days in protest of BHP's refusal to negotiate a union agreement and company moves to force workers to accept individual contracts.

The Australian Workers Union (AWU) has organized a rolling series of 24-hour work stoppages across BHP's steel mills since December in support of the iron ore miners, who belong to the AWU and some to the Construction, Forestry, Mining and Energy Union (CFMEU).

On January 18, the company brought busloads of workers who had signed individual contracts to the struck facilities. When strikers sought to block the gate, police charged the picket lines in Port Hedland and Newman. Eight unionists were arrested at each site. A number of pickets were injured, as police pushed and shoved through the picket lines. The brutal assault, captured on video tape by a striking worker, was shown on national television.

In response, 4,000 coal miners at BHP mines in New South Wales and Queensland struck for 24 hours. Patrick Basher, a fitter on strike at Newman, said the cops "were being brutal" when they attacked. He added he would come back to the picket line because it was a cause worth fighting for. These miners are all members of the CFMEU.

Following two days of clashes on the picket lines, BHP won a Supreme Court injunction against the five unions covering workers in the region. The bosses claimed the strikers were acting unlawfully by blocking a public road.

Union officials agreed to comply with the court order not to obstruct or hinder other workers gaining access to the site. However, pickets kept their lines up while allowing the buses through.

On January 20, more than 450 unionists gathered to protest in the central business district of Perth, the state capital of Western Australia. Trades and Labour Council secretary Tony Cooke told the crowd that it was to the great credit of the pickets, including women and children, that they had stood their ground when the police used batons on them.

As the conflict deepened, the International Metalworkers Federation (IMF) said it backed



Mine workers this past week have organized a number of strike actions against the BHP bosses' attempts to force workers to sign individual contracts. The Australian government deployed cops who attacked the strikers. More than a dozen workers have been arrested. Above, police arrest Australian Workers' Union official Paul Asplin at a Port Hedland picket line.

the unions here. The IMF said it was enlisting support from the International Transport Workers Federation (ITWF) which represents wharfies [dock workers] and seamen. The ITWF carried out actions in support of wharfies in their 1998 battle against union-busting on the waterfront.

Labeled the "Big Australian," BHP has major operations in steel, mining, and oil, which it has expanded around the world. It is a supplier of iron ore to Japanese and Korean

steel mills. The Japanese mills, led by Nippon Steel, suspended talks this week after failing to make much progress on setting prices for next year.

In the past, BHP fostered a reputation of working with union officials in contrast to rival companies like Rio Tinto, which imposed individual contracts in 1993 at its Hamersley iron ore operations.

Faced with two years of record losses, BHP's new managing director, Paul Anderson, slashed

12,000 jobs in a productivity drive against the union.

The Australian Council of Trade Unions (ACTU) said it will take legal action against BHP on behalf of the five unions. The federation will argue that BHP has breached the freedom of association provisions of the Workplace Relations Act because it is planning to discriminate against workers for choosing to stay in the union.

Workers have been offered a bribe of between \$12,000 and \$60,000 to sign individual contracts. The legal action is similar to the suit filed by the Maritime Union of Australia during its fight on the wharves in 1998.

CFMEU official Reg Coates pointed out that BHP is also trying to impose its Pilbara conditions on coal miners. The company "is demanding the unconditional surrender of mineworkers' right to industrial action."

An ACTU meeting in Melbourne is set to discuss a proposal from unions in Western Australia to take 24-hour strike action at all BHP operations.

As BHP workers across Australia give a fighting response to company union-busting, other workers are also taking action to defend union rights, from baggage handlers in Tasmania, to power workers in Victoria, to teachers and nurses in New South Wales. In the first national action since the 1998 lockout, wharfies at Patrick's facilities struck for half a shift January 18 over company attempts to gut the early retirement and redundancy [layoff] agreement.

Linda Harris is a member of the Textile, Clothing and Footwear Union of Australia. Denis Day from Port Hedland contributed to this article.

S. Africa mine disaster leaves six dead

BY T.J. FIGUEROA

PRETORIA, South Africa—A "seismic event" measuring 2.9 on the Richter scale caused a rock fall that trapped 15 miners underground at the African Rainbow Minerals Orkney gold mine southwest of Johannesburg January 10. Six miners died. Nine workers were rescued January 13.

"The safety precautions taken at Orkney were not adequate," National Union of Mineworkers (NUM) spokesperson George Molebatsi said in an interview. "That shaft had lain dormant for 15 years. What precautions were taken when reopening it? There were no alternate escape routes. The miners were trapped like rats. And the venti-

lation system used was not adequate."

The miners, working 1.3 miles below the surface, were preparing to reopen an area that had last been mined in 1984. In the "pillar mining" system used at Orkney, work is conducted around slabs of rock that separate roof from ground. Timber roof supports are also used.

"They discovered gold in the pillars and were preparing to mine the pillars themselves," Molebatsi said. "Mining activity induces such seismic events. They are not an 'act of God.' For the past 15 years there had been no seismic activity in that shaft," he said. "They began working the shaft in early January, and just about a week later there was such an event."

The 15 men were buried under tons of rock. "We kept on searching for people who were crying until there was no more sound," said Hlapane Lefielo, one of the miners who survived. Lefielo, who hails from Lesotho, established communication with rescue teams by banging on a small pipe. That pipe became the workers' only source of air, water and liquid foods for nearly four days.

Molebatsi said the NUM was also demanding a change in the industry use of so-called proto-teams—groups of artisans and supervisors that conduct rescue efforts. Such teams are overwhelmingly white, because under apartheid rule skilled and supervisory positions in mines were reserved for whites, and affirmative action has been slow to be implemented.

The NUM spokesperson said that the rescue team at Orkney was entirely white. All the trapped miners were black. "Workers have got more experience than these people," the union official said. "They may not have an education, but they know best when it comes to rescue efforts. Workers must be part of these teams, which in general only become active after an accident takes place."

Orkney was the site of one of South Africa's worst mine disasters in May 1995, when 104 miners were crushed to death when a cage fell more than 1,500 feet to the mine floor. At that time the mine was known as Anglo American's Vaal Reefs No. 2 shaft. Hundreds of thousands of workers joined demonstrations during a national day of mourning declared by then-president Nelson Mandela following that profit-driven disaster.

Molebatsi said the NUM is awaiting a report that is to be issued by the government's department of minerals and energy. "We have no intention of mounting protests. We want the implementation of existing legislation and research results," he said. About 5,000 people attended a memorial service for the six miners who were killed at Orkney.

Anglo-American's gold subsidiary, AngloGold, sold six "marginally profitable" gold mines, including the Orkney mine, to African Rainbow Minerals in 1998. This move was presented as a "black empowerment" deal—a term used by the government, big business, and the press here to describe the sale of businesses to a small but growing layer of capitalists who are black.

The chairman of African Rainbow Minerals, Patrice Motsepe, is an African. Motsepe's company and AngloGold split the profits from the Orkney mine.

Statistics released by the department of minerals and energy show that nearly one of every 1,000 miners is killed underground in South Africa. The mining houses continue to slash the size of the work force, particularly in the gold mines, citing the low gold price.

This trend continued in 1999: while exact figures are not yet available, Molebatsi said thousands of miners lost their jobs.

On average, hundreds of miners die every year as a result of the mining bosses' drive for profits.

Titan Tire and AK steelworkers win solidarity in Detroit

BY JOHN SARGE

DETROIT—Chanting "Titan Tire, AK, the union is here to stay," 75 trade unionists here joined two dozen members of the United Steelworkers of America (USWA) to bring these two struggles to the streets of this city.

The USWA members from Titan Tire in Des Moines, Iowa, and Natchez, Mississippi, joined eight locked-out workers at AK Steel in Mansfield, Ohio, for two days of activities here. Titan workers have been on strike since May 1998. AK Steel locked out more than 600 union members in September.

Steelworkers from AK got out information about their fight at the North American International Auto Show and joined Titan strikers to protest at offices and companies owned by Maurice Taylor, president and chief operating officer of Titan International

Inc., and Anthony Soave, a Detroit area boss who has invested more than \$5 million in Titan stock since the strike began. They also joined newspaper workers and others for a picket of the *Detroit News and Free Press* offices. Some 600 out of 2,500 workers who struck the two newspapers in 1995 remain locked out.

On January 22, 75 union supporters gathered in single digit temperatures at a shop owned by Taylor's wife, Michelle, another Titan stockholder, in downtown Grosse Pointe Farms. The steelworkers and others marched the mile and a half to Soave's lakefront mansion and to the gates of the private community in which the Taylors reside.

John Sarge is a member of United Auto Workers Local 900 in Wayne, Michigan.